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MISCELLANEOUS POEMS

MRS HANNAH VANLOON

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MISCELLANEOUS

POEMS

BY

Mrs. Hannah Van Loon.

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PREFACE.

Will some friends shake their heads,
And will the public's wondering look,
Be a rebuke I've merited—
Presuming thus to write a book?

If Justice is my judge,
I know my sentence ere I'm tried.
My only hope is Charity
May turn the scales on Mercy's side.

This is all my excuse—
I whiled away long hours of pain;
Trying to shape my uncouth thoughts,
So they might fit some tuneful strain.

And if too partial friends
Let kind hearts speak, instead of sense,
When they said, "make a book," they erred
For love, and love hath recompense.

If aught of hope or cheer
To one heart, bowing 'neath the rod,
My poor weak words have ever given,
Most earnestly I say, "thank God!"

And, if this crucial test
Decides that naught of gold there be,
I'll hug this comfort to my heart—
How well my friends must have loved me!

MARGARET.

Margaret, Margaret,
List to my pleading !
Can'st thou be unheeding,
When I cry to thee out of a heart that is bleeding ?
Come, one little hour, from the shadowy shore
And talk to me, dear, in the olden love-lore;
Be my own true love, my darling, once more :
Be my own Margaret.

Margaret, Margaret,
They said you were sleeping
In the Lover's keeping,
And they chided, they chided my over-much weeping ;
Then softly I lifted the enshrouding lace
Away from thy hair, from thy beautiful face,
And I cried, "look up with thy shy, sweet grace !"
This I plead, Margaret.

Margaret, Margaret,
Give me some token,
If aught I have spoken
Hath pulsed in thy heart, or thy deep sleep hath broken.
Dost thou not answer, by look or by word ?
Yet, my own darling, I know thou hast heard,
For the white lilies on thy bosom stirred :
Thou hast heard, Margaret ?

Margaret, Margaret,
Come back and tell me,
What was it befell thee
That night my heart did in anguish bewail thee ?
Who stole thy roses and gave thee instead
Lilies, whiter than garlands we weave for our dead ?
How could'st thou sleep when so loudly I plead
To waken thee, Margaret ?

Margaret, Margaret,
What was the waking,
What was the breaking
Of slumber that doomed my heart bitterest aching :
Say, did the Bridegroom thee tenderly bear
O'er balm-breathing seas, to His mansion so fair ?
A diadem, almost outshining thy hair,
Wearest thou, Margaret ?

Margaret Margaret,
If I were sleeping,
And thou vigil keeping,
I would awaken at sound of thy weeping ;
Or had I passed o'er the seas breathing balm,
Into the land of the olive and palm,
Thy plaint would reach me ; thro' all heaven's calm,
I would list, Margaret.

Margaret, Margaret,
I am benighted,

No beacon hath lighted
My life's trackless sea, but the love that thou plighted—
Thou wert chart and compass, my frail bark to guide,
Now aimless I drift on the merciless tide,
And I shall be shipwrecked afar from thy side—
Pity me, Margaret.

Margaret, Margaret,
Thro' the June gloaming
I'm restlessly roaming,
Oh would to God I could hear thy step coming—
See how the pine trees bend low now to list,
See their arms out-stretched to welcome our tryst,
Here, where our troth-plight we tenderly kissed—
God help me, Margaret.

DARKENED.

They brought a rose to my darkened room,
Impearled with dew, breathing soft perfume.
A rose to prove to my doubting brain
That lovely June graced the earth again.

I touched its petals in fond surprise,
I feasted long with my hungry eyes;
Then the sweet flower by some subtle art,
Transferred its dew to my thirsting heart.

And then I knew, in my darkened room,
That earth was bright in her summer bloom:
And then I heard in sweetest words,
The brooklets answering to the birds.

And thought went back to another June,
When my voice caroled the song-birds' tune,
When glad I roamed through sunny bowers,
And garlands wove from brightest flowers.

Ah, life was then but a rhythmic beat,
Whose measures timed with my bounding feet:
Whose future seemed with rare garlands hung,
With bird-notes changed to a fuller song.

Now, who will whisper the sad, sad words
To waiting flowers and wondering birds,
That she who loved them may never come,
But weeps alone in her darkened room?

Must I lie here, with my folded hands,
Until life ekes out her golden sands?
Of God-given being is this my part,
To crush back tears on a breaking heart?

O, pitying God, come in tender love
And fill my soul till thy presence prove
That wondrous beauty and rich perfume
May reach even me, in my darkened room.

NOW AND THEN.

What say ye winds at my window-pane?
Whisper ye love to the gentle rain?
Or strive ye with amorous breath to dry
The tears that fall from a grieving sky?

Ah, ye are chanting a funeral hymn:
To me ye are singing a requiem,
For my loved and lost of the bygone years,
And clouds keep time with their falling tears.

Come closer, winds, to my window-pane,
And sing to me of my loved again ;
Sing soft and low, that no careless ear
The tender dirge for my lost may hear.

O pitying winds, can ye pierce the veil
Of the mystic world ? O can ye tell
To me one secret of that fair clime ?
Will mine on earth, in heaven be mine ?

Now come with me where she lies asleep,
Where the cypress bendeth, lone watch to keep,
Where flowers have bloomed thro' the long, long
years,
By my kisses warmed, watered by my tears.

When no more I weep at my darling's grave,
When tender grasses o'er me shall wave,
Will ye sometimes in the summer hours,
Woo gentle rains to the drooping flowers ?

But sing no dirge for my darling then ;
From an angel-choir catch the sweet refrain
Of an amthem glad, that through heaven swells,
Where two lovers roam, crowned with *immortelles*.

SABBATH BELLS.

Hushing every doubt and care,
Winning us to praise and prayer,
Chime the sweet bells on the air ;
Sweet Sabbath bells.
And the hills give back again,
Echoes of the tender strain,
While our hearts beat the refrain :
Sweet Sabbath bells !

Now they whisper pleadingly,
" Sinner, I have died for thee ;
Wilt thou come and worship me ?
Come, sinner, come,
From thy toil and care away,
On this holy Sabbath day,
Come and learn to praise and pray ;
Come, sinner, come."

Now the chimes are full and sweet,
As the loving bells repeat,
" Haste, O haste thy laggard feet ;
Jesus is here !"
And the last, low, tender strain
Dies away o'er hill and plain,
While we sing the sweet refrain,
" Jesus is here !"

My Magician.

While the purple twilight lingers,
Midway 'twixt the dark and bright ;
Reaching out with shadowy fingers,
Toward the day and toward the night,

Come magician, 'tis the hour
Sacred to sweet minstrelsy ;
Come, and with a heav'n-born power
Wake thy harp's sweet melody.

Strike no note of joy or gladness,
For my heart is sick with fears ;
Touch some key of plaintive sadness,
To unlock the fount of tears.

All my soul is dark within me,
All my hopes are stricken bare,
And the powers of sin enchain me,
In the prison of despair.

* * * * *

O the blessed power of healing,
Minstrel, in thy tender strain !
Thou the fount of tears unsealing,
I have wept away my pain.

FAITHFUL PEN, FAREWELL.

I have nothing to write,
For the beautiful thoughts have all passed away,
From the bright world of Poesy gleameth no ray
To illumine my night.

Yea, my long starless night,
Where blindly I grope o'er the pitless way ;
Where song birds are mute that enlivened the day ;
Where there cometh no light.

Yet once more thou may'st write,
Dear faithful Pen, ere forever we part ;
Thou may'st pour out that long, bitter cry of my heart,
Thou heard'st on that night,

When I wailed for my dead—
Not the dead that lie yonder with pale, folded hands,
In flower-strewn graves, where the white marble stands
At the foot and the head ;

But my dead hope and faith,
That I carefully shrouded and coffined from sight,
And laid in a grave in my sad heart that night—
Placing o'er them the wreath

I had tearfully made,
Of flowers that bloomed where my treasures were shrined,
Now faded and scentless ; of them I entwined
Garlands meet for my dead.

Faithful Pen, *can*'st thou write
That long, wailing cry, that sad cry of despair,
When I knelt at an altar broken and bare ;
When my day turned to night ?

When my breaking heart strove—
Thro' that long vigil of black midnight hours,
While faint from the odor of dying heart-flowers—
To keep hidden its grave ?

Ah, with ready delight,
Thou did'st speak in the past love's beautiful words—
Thou hast blossomed with flowers and sung with the birds—
Art thou palsied to-night ?

* * * * * *

I have nothing to write,
For the beautiful thoughts have all passed away.
This only I whisper, "my idols were clay !"
Whisper thro' the long night.

TO * * * * *

Adown the path, saying never a word,
I walk to-night in the tender gloaming ;
But ah, my beautiful flowers have heard,
And one says, "Hark ! it is she a-coming !
I was almost sure she would come to-night,
So I have dressed in my daintiest white."

Another says, "I think I'll wear red,
The dress I wore when she stooped above me
And kindly lifting my bashful head,
Kissed me and said she would always love me.
Perhaps I don't look the best in red,
But I remember just what she said."

And here's a group in such lovely pink,
Tied cunningly with dainty, white sashes—
The sweet vain things—I shall always think
They peeked at me, from under their lashes
Slyly, to see if my face expressed
Surprise that they had such perfect taste.

And there, so stately and proud and grand,
Another group wear rich, purple dresses.
They are queenly ladies, born to command,
Ignoring compliments and caresses :
But I wonder what made Miss Purple sigh
When I kissed her neighbor, over the way ?

Sweet, little Pansies—I know, I know
Whose lips have welcomings for my coming ;
Whose shy soft eyes are with love aglow,
Shining on me through the tender gloaming—
I never can tell just how you are dressed,
But—I'll whisper low—but I love you best.

Those marigolds are so very fine,
In velvet gowns of the latest fashions ;
And yet they are not too proud to own
Even the poorest of their relations.
There is a lady in velvet now,
Chatting with little Miss Calico.

Of course I meant a long verse to write
About my pinks and their wondrous graces,
And every word they say to-night,
Lifting to me their beautiful faces :
But how can I write and make it rhyme,
With them a-talking all of the time ?

Now, darling, will you not come to me
To-morrow night, through the tender gloaming ?
Then all my beautiful flowers will be
In fullest dress, to greet your coming :
And you will wonder how I could time
Even these poor verses, and make them rhyme.

SATURDAY NIGHT.

Backward and forward, quietly rocking,
Busily knitting my old man's stocking ;
Steadily watching the firelight's gleaming,
Never I miss a stitch in the seaming.

Forward and backward, quietly rocking,
Trying to finish my old man's stocking ;
Ah would you guess my thoughts are a-flitting
Far, far away from the stocking I'm knitting ?

* * * * * *

A child gathering flowers, with summer winds playing
Through tangled curls, that ever are straying
O'er cheeks that seem to have been imprinted
By colors with which roses were tinted.

A school girl murmurs, homeward returning,
"Ah, much I fear these lessons I'm learning
Never will pay for the many long hours,
I'm shut away from the sunshine and flowers."

Maiden and lover, through summer's soft gloaming,
Hand clasped in hand, are happily roaming,
Down where the scent from bright clover meadows,
Coming to them through deepening shadows,

Brings a rare joy with its subtle sweetness ;
Only a part of their love's completeness.
Ah, with a future all golden seeming,
Life has to them the happiest meaning.

Hark, sweet-toned bells are merrily pealing,
Where a fair bride at the altar is kneeling ;
Vowing that for love, one heart will give her,
She will be true forever and ever.

Hand clasped in hand, hearts beating one measure,
Love soothing pain and sweetening pleasure,
Sharing all gains and sharing all losses,
Taking the crowns to garland the crosses.

Ah memory, I love here to linger,
Ere stern-browed Time, with relentless finger,
Left on each form and feature his tracing,
The brightest tints in the picture effacing.

Let me pass quickly o'er each scene of sorrow,
When sad to-day brought a sadder to-morrow.
I'll not repine though clouds darken the even ;
Earth must grow dim as we near the bright heaven.

* * * * * *

Clock striking twelve ? Ah, no wonder I'm blinking !
Strange, what queer thoughts old folks will be thinking !
Well, I am glad, while knitting and rocking,
I've got to the toe of my old man's stocking.

ANOTHER SATURDAY NIGHT.

Now lay a fresh stick on the flickerin' fire,
And draw up my arm-chair a leetle bit nigher :
The very old chair I was quietly rockin'
The night that I finished a-knittin' this stockin'.

I wonder how long my old man's been a-wearin'
These stockins', without any stitch of repairin'.
At the week's end, you know, I fresh them for Monday :
A pair knit of lamb's wool he wears of a Sunday.

It's nigh on a year. Well my old man's been keerful,
But to-night he said sadly, "Hanner, I'm fearful
You can't have no comfort this evenin' a-rockin',
For a heel and some toes I've punched clean through each stockin'."

I confess to a-somethin' in my throat uprisin',
When he mentioned so sudden, a fact so surprisin' ;
But I choked back the lump with the air of a stoic,
And Fame has recorded deeds not more heroic.

I had just read in Proverbs, perhaps 'twas a warnin',
That "all things have their time," knittin' begetteth darnin':

But 't's comfortable-like, knittin', dreamin' and rockin',
Such a different thing from darnin' a stockin'.

My hands bother me so, a-tremblin' and shakin',
And my bones seem to try which can do the most achin';
I've grown all so strange-like, so worn out and jaded,
Like my old arm-chair's cushions, I'm threadbare and faded.

Well, brighten the fire, I must have light a-plenty;
Darnin' stockins' at threescore, ain't courtin' at twenty:
And dust off my specs, my week's work is unended,
'Till the heels and the toes of these stockins' are mended.

* * * * * *

Yes, my old man and me have got on well together;
We've had some clear days and some right cloudy weather,
We've drank of life's gall, of its sweetest wine tasted,
Reaped some plentiful fields, mourned some vineyard toil wasted.

Sometimes the dear Master set tasks for our learnin'
That seemed all too hard for our weak minds' discernin';

Sometimes, when rough ways bruised our feet nigh to bleedin',
We covered our eyes and just reached for His leadin'.

Well, some sow and some reap while there's others for gleanin'.
Each problem of life has a beautiful meanin';
And, if the good Master never catches us shirkin',
Sometime we will know why we needed their workin'.

If the warp be of love and the woof be of duty,
Let us patiently weave cloth of plainness or beauty;
Then we'll hear the "well done" when tasks are all ended,
Wrought we with thread of gold or old garments mended.

* * * * * *

Well, these stockins' are done. A long time it has taken;
But the light has been dim and my hands are so shakin':
And its perticler work, this 'ere toein' and heelin',
When you do just your best for the looks and the feelin'.

* * * * * *

Now I wonder what's that. Is the north wind a-roarin'?
Oh my tired old man is a-nappin' and snorin'.
Well, Saturday night begets rest on a Sunday,
And we won't have no worry 'bout stockins' for Monday

NOVEMBER.

The drear November wind,
Burdened with weary rain,
Is beating ceaselessly
Against my window pane;
Drifting dead leaves,
From vines that cling
To low black eaves;
And wind, and rain, and leaves all sighing, crying,
Are fitting requiem for heart-flowers dying.

Cold fingers interlace
And press my eyelids down;
Shut out the pain and loss,
The gardens bare and brown,
And all things dead;
Let bud and bloom
Be mine instead;
On my wan, wasted cheeks droop pitying lashes,
Let me conjure love's flame from love's cold ashes.

* * * * * *

The lilac's scent and bloom,
The swallows in the eaves.
The south wind tenderly
Wooing the half-shy leaves;
Mid white and pink
Of orchard blooms,
Swings Bobolink
Trilling his liquid notes—"listen sweet, sweeter, sweetest"—
Of all Spring's roundelays, Sir Robert's is completest.

Adown the orchard path,
Under the full white moon,
A song thro' all my life,
Rarer than rare perfume—
Is't tender lay
That April sings
Or harp of May?
Or is it soul-full June, from out her rose-bowers singing?
Or from Octocer's throne, is she an anthem ringing?

A sense of some great gain,
Harmonious, complete,
Fibered thro' heart and brain,
A something subtly sweet—
My very own,
Yet glorying all—
A tender tune,
Soft as Æolian harp, swept by love's gentlest whispers.
To sweeter chords than chimes of bells at hour of vespers.

* * * * * *

O sobbing winds be low;
Skies, softly drop your tears,
Lest ye disturb my dead
In unmarked sepulchres—
Ghosts might arise
My weak brain could
Not exorcise—
What are the dead to us after the sad entombing?
If brown leaves drift away, there'll be another blooming.

EXORCISM.

Sing to me, darling, some low loving words,
Touch now thy lute-strings to tenderest chords;
By sweetest exorcism, put thou to flight
The restless spirit that haunts me to night.

Lightly and lovingly soundeth a strain,
Bearing me back to my childhood again,
Where bright-winged song-birds make tuneful the hours—
Care-free, I roam, plucking sweet-scented flowers.

Beat low, O heart! there are whispers of love,
As sweet methinks as the harp-notes above;
Mutely I sit and with close-veiled eyes,
Bar I the world from my love-paradise.

Grave, earnest notes, how like duties they seem,
Almost too real after love's blissful dream.
Why, with love's harmony blendeth its care?
Why, for a smile, is the tribute a tear?

Now soothing strains, by sweet Pity inspired,
Drop restful balm in my life, worn and tired;
And while Faith whispers a gentle refrain,
My spirit soars from earth's sorrow and pain.

Author of music, thou kindly hast given
Earth some sweet chords, as a prelude to heaven;
But the full chorus of rapturous praise,
Near thy white throne, our glad voices shall raise.

HOMESICK.

Worn and marred by toil
On a stranger soil,
Father, list the plea of a homesick child,
Who entreats to come
To the well-loved home
From which so long he has been exiled.

Day is almost spent,
I am tired and faint,
And my burden greater than I can bear ;
And I long to-night
To be washed all white,
Meet for my home that is bright and fair.

My home which stands
On the golden sands,
That are kissed and kissed by the silver spray ;
Where my heart's delight,
Lilies snowy white,
With fragrant lips greet the perfect day.

Where in gardens fair,
The soft summer air
The scent of roses forever keeps ;
And the tender flush
Of their first sweet blush,
Never grows pale on their dewy lips.

Father, let me come
To my own sweet home,
For weary, restless, I cannot wait;
And why must I toil
On a foreign soil,
When I am heir to such rich estate?

Why must I glean
On the harvest plain,
Or bind the sheaves where the reapers led,
While lilies white,
My heart's delight,
Woo me to rest in their scented bed?

Why from grudging vine
Wring the tardy wine,
Perchance my portion but bitter lees;
'Till I faint and fall,
While my roses call,
Their loving lips wet with healing dews?

Must the jarring words
Of life's harsh discords,
Fall longer on my unwilling ear,
While soft harmonies
Flow from golden keys,
Blent with sweet songs from the white-robed choir?

Must Thy homesick child
Longer be exiled,
With the brand of slavery on mind and brow?
Father, loose the bands
From these trembling hands:
O, set Thy seal on my forehead now.

ALMOST HOME.

I'm almost home, dear Lizzie,
Though travel-stained and worn;
For rough and dark the valley
Ere gleamed the light of morn:
But soon I'll rest me, darling,
Where "tears are wiped away,"
Exchange earth's gloomy shadows
For realms of perfect day,

He called thee home, dear Lizzie,
When thou wert young and fair,
A bud of rarest promise
To bloom in purer air;
In anguish deep I watched thee
Passing from me away,
With breaking heart I saw thee
In lifeless beauty lay.

Oft times in dreams, dear Lizzie,
As in the olden time
Thy soft white hand is lying
So trustingly in mine ;
And thy dear eyes are gazing
With fondness in my own,
Alas ! the waking finds me
Despairing and alone.

But this dark night, dear Lizzie,
Is ushering in the morn,
That knows no change or darkness,
Of God's own radiance born ;
These feet, so weary, halting,
Shall walk the streets of gold ;
These eyes, so dim with weeping,
My Father's face behold.

My heart grows faint, dear Lizzie,
Death's damp is on my brow,
Earth's shore is fast receding,
Cold waves enfold me now ;
But through the mist there gleameth
A shining angel-band,
And one bright form draws near me,
My darling lost and gained.

TO A FRIEND IN ENGLAND.

What precious gift have I to send
To thee on thy birthday?
What wouldst thou prize the most, dear friend
From one so far away?

Some dainty gift, that cunning hands
Have wrought so skillfully,
To tell, thee that in foreign lands,
I still remember thee?

Or wouldst thou choose some offering rare,
Some rich and costly gem,
To sparkle on thy brow or hair,
Worn in memoriam?

Ah, dearest friend, souvenirs of art,
Mere wealth oft times doth give,
And well I know thy fond, true heart
Will dearer prize my love.

So on thy birthday I would fain
The truest friendship prove,
And kneeling at God's holy shrine
I pray, "Keep her I love;

And give her from Thy wealth untold,
Each day, some priceless gem,
And at the last a harp of gold
And fadeless diadem."

FLORENCE.

She has gone to rest,
With a cross of lilies upon her breast

And pale asters press
Their scented lips to her paler face ;

And the lilies sigh,
"We loved her so, we will with her die !"

And the asters make
Their life an offering for her sake.

Tender, soft, and sweet,
The organ grieves for the desolate :

Plaintive, low and sad,
A dirge is sung for the early dead ;

And Rachael's lot
Is the mother's now, for the *child is not*.

And the father's head
Is a little whiter since she is dead ;

And the sisters make
Pretence of calm, for each other's sake :

And a brother grieves
For as true a friend as the sad earth gives.

By a coffin lid,
The light of a tender home is hid ;

And the night-winds moan
Over the bed where she lies alone ;

And the cypress blends
Its sighing voice with the moaning winds.

* * * * * *

What influence sweet,
By day is guiding our weary feet ?

What beacon light
Shines out thro' the darkest hours of night ?

Ah the "earth to earth"
Was but the part that had mortal birth.

Still we watch and wait,
But she has passed thro' the golden gate ;

And our guiding star
Shines down to us thro' the gates ajar.

MISTAKEN.

I cannot remember just when I grew tired,
How the heart ache began ;
But most of the way I have so much desired
That the journey were done ;
And now I am weary, so weary of all,
I'm glad to lie down with my face to the wall.

Why yes, there was spring-time, when violets bloomed
Thro' long sunny days,
Then came the summer, when roses perfumed
Such beautiful ways ;
All too soon; autumn dropped over all ;
Now I will turn my sad face to the wall.

I know you will say that He chastens in love,
Or else we would roam ;
That darkness below keeps us looking above
To the beautiful home ;
Tried and tempted as we, then He knoweth all,
And will be near when I turn to the wall.

Long have I waited my tube-roses' bloom—
Watched and waited so long—
I said, "of their loveliness and rare perfume
I will sing a sweet song."
To-morrow, just missing the song, that is all,
Place one rose in the clasped hands by the wall.

I know by the music that floats through my room,
The "gates" are ajar;
I know by the scent, Eden's lilies a-bloom
Are breathing a-near;
And, I think, by the glory that shines over all,
I must have turned to the bright "jasper wall."

The gates are all shut, St. Peter sends word,
Himself holds the key;
Then whence the perfume and the music I heard,
The glory I see?
Ah, my tube-roses guessed and escaped from their tharll,
Then my muse swept the chords for my song, that was all.

WAITING.

I was waiting thro' the spring-time
For the roses June would bring,
Leaving violets ungathered—
Perfumed May's sweet offering—
But when Summer, crowned with roses,
Wove rare garlands for her bowers,
In my heart a chill November
Stole the sweetness from the flowers.

I was waiting, while my fingers
Touched my harp-strings carelessly,
For the softer, sweeter music
Of the lands beyond the sea.
Dear old harp, again I'm waiting,
After weary wanderings,
Let us try a strain together,
Ah, I find but broken strings.

I was waiting thro' the vintage
For the sweetest, rarest grapes,
Now but lees the wine-cup holdeth
That I raise to parched lips.
Love, I said, shall bless and crown me,
Fool and blind, too late I learned,
While a princely mien I waited,
I a kingly heart had spurned.

Still I'm waiting for the roses
That perfumed the summer-land;
Still I'm waiting for the vineyard
Where the rarest grapes abound:
Waiting for the crown Love bought me,
When its price was Calvary;
Waiting for the golden harp-strings,
Waiting, precious Christ, for Thee.

A Morning Call.

Did I go to church? Yes, I always attend—
'Tis our duty, I think, to be there—
Please don't mention it, I tell you as a friend,
I saw some things I thought very queer.

I never will gossip about church affairs,
I wish all my neighbors were so;
'Tis none of my business what anyone wears,
Or how often, or seldom, they go.

Yet I think our church folks ought to dress plain,
And leave off their fashionable airs.
That stylish Miss G—— how worldly and vain,
In her flounces and curls, she appears.

One lady was there—I won't mention her name—
Perhaps you can guess who she is,
A full half-hour late—such things are a shame—
But it takes time to crimp, curl and friz.

I fully approved what the minister said
Of alms, and the claims of the poor.
I could not help looking at old Mr. Bred;
The "coat fiitted him," I am sure.

I noticed too, when they passed 'round the plate,
A number had nothing to give.
I think that preachers ought oftener state,
"'Tis more blessed to give than receive."

Oh yes, and an editor too, there I saw—
Quite a "good-looking" sort of a man—
I'm not in the habit of picking a flaw
About trifles, like some folks I've seen ;

But just as the preacher his "ninthly" commenced,
I happened to look 'round the house,
There the editor sat, his thoughts all condensed
On an ounce of "fine cut" in his mouth.

The sermon, I'm sure, was an excellent one—
Inspiring, devotional, chaste—
I think it a pity that one tiny crumb
Of such precious food should go to waste.

Elevating and grand, how could any one
Think of "fine cut," from first unto last ?
That editor's stomach must be out of tone,
Or he wouldn't have such a bad taste.

The text did you ask ? Why, I almost forget.
Was it Genesis ? No, 'twas in Job !

Something about Paul—how he saw a great light—
And of righteousness worn as a robe.

When folks go to church they should untrammeled be
By fashion, and all worldly care—
The styles scarcely notice—O, Kate, did you see
How old-fashioned Miss C—— does her hair?

Ah, must you be going? Call again soon,
I am profited when we converse.
Some folks are so senseless; their thoughts seem to run
All on fashions, or gossip, or worse.

APRIL 26TH.

The wind is abroad on a spree to-night—
A boisterous, rollicking spree—
We cannot accuse him of being "tight,"
For his movements are all too free.

Roughly he handles the bare-limbed old trees,
Rudely swaying them to and fro;
Scattering dead branches wherever he please,
Making wreathes of the April snow.

He tried to embrace an old, sober fence,
Coming 'round with a loving growl;
Splinters flew at him, in anger intense,
And he sped away with a howl.

Window-panes rattle, and loose boards keep time
To a tune, both long and short measure—
Now groaning blank verse, now jingling a rhyme—
Such music is scarcely a pleasure.

If he must make such a terrible blow,
Why didn't he do it in March?
Then we expected him, covered with snow,
The strength of our buildings to search.

I wish he would fold his noisy old wings,
And hie away home for a nap;
I'm tired of the tune so hoarsely he sings,
He's caught cold, the careless old chap.

Alto and tenor, soprano and bass,
By one voice is not quite the thing;
I hope, as such concerts are now out of place,
He'll not give another this spring.

To a Baby.

Baby, baby, come to me,
Like the honey-bee that sips
Nectar from the rose-bud's lips,
I would gather sweets from thee.

Little birdie, do you know—
Chirrup, chirrup, as you may—
I know ev'ry word you say?
Tell some pretty stories now.

Sweetest baby, do you know,
With your cunning little wiles,
Winning gravest lips to smiles,
That I love you, love you so?

Precious darling, what surprise—
As your dimpled hands I take,
Teaching you to "patty-cake"—
Gleams from out your sweet blue eyes.

Why, what ails my little pet,
Reaching hands again to me,
Do you want more cakes for tea?
Well, we'll make another set.

Come now, baby, kiss good-bye.
What is't makes my darling grieve?
Ah you naughty "make-believe,"
You are only playing cry.

My Priest of Priests.

There's a "Holy of Holies" within my heart,
An innermost room that is kept ever pure ;
In this hallowed place, I have set apart
A Great High Priest who abideth there.

No foot hath trodden the threshold o'er,
Since the day that my Priest of priests passed in ;
And closely barred and guarded's the door
That leadeth into this holiest shrine.

In the outer courts, my friends may come,
They are swept and garnished all with care ;
There are bidden guests for every room,
And altars placed with off'rings rare.

There are hands awaiting to wipe the tears
From the eyes of Sorrow, Care and Pain ;
There is balm for wounds, cordial for fears ;
For the travel-stained, are garments clean.

If hung'ring or thirsting ones chance to come
And knock at the door of the outer shrine,
Glad welcome there'll be, in the Father's name,
And a bounteous feast of bread and wine.

But ah ! never knock at the inner door,
The "Holy of Holies," within my heart ;
This innermost place is reserved evermore ,
For Christ the High Priest, I've set it apart.

UNDER THE PINES.

Have ye waited long for our coming ?
  Have ye watched at the trysting hour ?
Have ye wondered why, through the gloaming,
  We came not to the " lovers' bower ?"

Alone, through the deepening shadows,
  I have wearily, wearily come,
But the dear old path, through the meadows,
  To-night seemed hidden in gloom.

No lover met me in the gloaming—
  Bend down, I would whisper it low,
I nevermore watch for his coming,
  Never wait for the trysting hour now—;

For he met a face that was fairer,
  And a heart more joyous and free.
Ah me, will she lightly be wearer
  Of the crown that was heaven to me ?

I gave back the troth that he plighted,
  Still hiding the tears that would start.
He knew not a life he had blighted,
  Never guessed he had broken a heart.

He kissed me good-bye, when we parted,
  And promised my friend still to be.
Oh no, I'll not deem him false-hearted ;
  His love only wandered from me.

I remember your whispers grew gladder,
To blend in my love-song's refrain ;
To-night each sad sigh groweth sadder,
A chord of a heart's dying pain.

When autumn shall lovingly cover
The path with a carpet all bright,
They will carry me tenderly over
The way I have trodden to-night.

A voice will speak softly in sorrow,
As " dust unto dust " it consigns ;
But none will be sad on the morrow,
For her who sleeps under the pines.

I know you will grieve when I'm lying,
With pale folded hands at your feet :
All the long, long day, sadly sighing
A dirge, that is mournfully sweet.

Good-bye, dear old pines ; still be keeping
Your watch. I am coming again
When my eyes are done with their weeping,
And my heart hath forgotten its pain.

And sweetly I'll sleep in the wild-wood,
Though tear-drops ne'er moisten my bed,
For you, truest friends of my childhood,
Will a vigil still keep o'er your dead.

DEAR PINES, I COME AGAIN.

Not as I came in the years agone,
With gladsome song and with blithesome tread :
My step is slow, and my heart makes moan
For the by-gone days and my early dead.

My dead, that never was seen of men—
My dead, that had neither pall nor bier—
That I made a grave in my heart, and then
Sealed close the place of the sepulchre.

Ah, do ye mind of the happy time
I lingered first in your fragrant shade :
As lightly singing some careless rhyme,
This mossy seat at your feet I made ?

And mind ye, too, of that sweet, sweet June—
When birds and bloom made all nature glad—
How ye strove to join in my merry tune,
Albeit your voice was a bit too sad ?

Ah me, ah me, was it fate or chance
That led his steps to my side that day :
Bringing me treasures of old romance,
Bringing the world of sweet poesy ?

And, you remember, my slow feet crept
Adown the path over autumn leaves :
No words I said and no tears I wept,
Yet slowly, sadly, as when one grieves.

Ye sang to me tender lullabies,
Your arms out-stretched in sweet sympathy.
Oh, would to God, I had shut my eyes,
And your lullaby proved a dirge for me.

Now tell me true, did his truant feet
Ever come back in the after years,
And kneeling here by our mossy seat,
Did he breathe my name with regretful tears?

O whisper low, whisper soft and low,
Else the careless winds as they roam might list.
Did he ever speak of an olden vow,
Did he ever sigh o'er a broken tryst?

* * * * * *

Spring still puts on a soft garb of green,
In flower-decked robes is the Summer dressed;
Crimson and gold proclaim Autumn's reign,
Through all I see but a wintry waste.

* * * * * *

Dear pines, sing me olden lullabies;
I am so tired that I fain would sleep;
The lids droop low o'er my dimning eyes.
And the Lover cometh his tryst to keep.

A Prayer.

Father, I bring my burden, and at Thy altar kneeling,
So faint with earthly striving—so worn with earthly care—
To-night I plead Thy promise: "Ask and it shall be given:"
O Father, hear my prayer.

Is there no balm in Gilead? I am sorely wounded.
O is there no physician to heal a sin-sick soul?
Come near, Thou pitying Jesus, let me but touch Thy garment
And that shall make me whole.

My paths have led so strangely—so darkly overshadowed—
So often I have murmured, "I cannot understand;"
Help me, through faith, to trust Thee—to humbly seek Thy guidance—
To know my Father's hand.

O Father, dost Thou listen? Thy weakest child is calling
Through mists of doubt and darkness, that still obscure the way:
Guide me into the sunlight—I've walked so long in shadow—
O teach me *how* to pray.

Hark'n a voice now speaketh: "I bore thy grievous burden,
For all thy sins atoning on bloody Calvary."
Father, the sunlight gleameth athwart the gloomy shadows;
I'll rest my all on Thee.

THE BEAUTIFUL RIVER

The lilies are sweet by the Beautiful River,
Its bright waters perfuming ;
I'll rest me, and rest me, for aye and forever,
Where the lilies are blooming ;
With sandals aloose, for my ways are all wended,
With hands lightly clasped, for my tasks are all ended.

Over there is the City, in tender light lying,
Fair as bride's white adorning ;
Where there is no death, neither sorrow nor crying,
Where the Star of the Morning
Is the Light of the City, for aye and forever,
While its tenderest beams bathe the Beautiful River.

And out from the City, a sound of sweet singing
Floats thro' the wide portals ;
In anthems triumphant the harpers are ringing,
The joys of immortals ;
But sweeter the voice of the Beautiul River,
That whispers, " Here rest thee, for aye and forever."

'Tis the New Jerusalem ! 'tis the promised City !
'Tis John's wonderful vision !
She sitteth a bride in her virginal beauty,
Her people's Elysian ;
And her music is floating for aye and forever,
Where her Star's softest beams bathe the Beautiful River.

What whisper ye, lilies ? I will bend me and hearken
The sweet words ye are saying,
"Go not with the harpers, weary hands cannot waken
The grand chords they are playing.
There's a hush in the voice of the Beautiful River
That will lull thee to resting for aye and forever"

MUSINGS.

Slanting sunbeams softly cover
Me with tender, golden light,
As I sit here, thinking over
All those wondrous dreams, to-night—
When I followed Fancy's leading
Through her bright, enchanted bowers—
When my feet were ever treading,
Paths half hidden in the flowers.

Ah, again I hear sweet whispers,
Like soft zephyrs set in tune ;
Now it seems a hymn of vespers,
Floating to the great white throne :
Louder grow the notes, and clearer,
Choral incense pure and sweet ;
And my soul to heaven grows nearer,
Drinking in the infinite.

Now the evening's purple shadows
Mantle all the sunset glow.
Darker grow the daisied meadows—
Veiled in gloom is the mountain's brow—

And the vesper notes are dying
On the distant hill and plain ;
While night-winds seem sadly sighing,
"Heaven has closed its gates again."

Spirit, are thy glad wings drooping ?
Ends so soon thy joyous flight ?
With the finite art thou groping,
Letting go the infinite ?
Art thou sad because yon mountain
Echoes now no sweet refrain ?
Thou may'st linger at the Fountain,
Drinking an immortal strain.

To the brightest, sweetest day-dreams,
Rude awaking may come soon.
Swiftly vanish golden sunbeams,
Pleasure's sky may cloud ere noon.
Paths that Fancy filled with flowers,
May by weeds be overgrown ;
And in ruins fall her towers,
Built without foundation-stone.

But there standeth, close beside me,
A sure Rock—higher than I—
In its shadow I will hide me,
'Till earth's storms have all passed by :
'Till I see the walls eternal,
In the stead of crumbling towers ;
'Till I weave a wreathe supernal,
In the stead of fading flowers.

MISSION OF THE GOSPEL.

A mission I have to your fireside, to-day,
A welcome I ask which I hope to repay ;
Tho' humble my dress do not cast me aside,
For I bring you gold from dross purified ;
Yea, gold that will make you rich in that day,
When all earthly treasures shall pass away.

Glad tidings I bring to the sad and oppressed,
To fainting and weary ones I speak of rest.
If any are treading the pathway of sin,
I come to beseech you a new life begin.
If any are thirsting, to you I would say,
The fountain of life floweth freely to-day.

And you who have laid up your treasures above,
Bear fruit of the spirit, hope, gentleness, love,
Long-suffering, meekness, joy, temperance, faith,
God's grace is sufficient, be faithful till death ;
Like a city that's set on a hill, let thy light
Illumine the darkness, guide the doubting aright.

Yes, welcome I ask in your home, in your heart,
While I strive in return God's truth to impart ;
Salvation through Jesus, my motto and song,
Upholding the right, condemning the wrong,
To work for my Master will be all my aim ;
God grant that my mission may not be in vain.

ASTRAY.

Alone on the moorlands, bleak and bare,
Too weary to walk, and too faint to pray,
Oh! why did I leave the Shepherd's care?
From the safe, warm fold why did I stray?

Will answer to voiceless prayer be given?
Will the famished cry of a heart be heard,
Tho' darkened eyes cannot raise to heaven,
And white lips utter never a word?

Will He leave the ninety and nine to seek
The perishing one, outside the fold?
Will His great love traverse mountains bleak,
To rescue me from the bitter cold?

Into the depths of despairing sin,
Will His mercy follow my bleeding feet?
From mire and filth will He wash me clean,
And give me robes for His presence meet?

* * * *

I had an idol I could not take
With me, if I walked by the Shepherd's side;
So I turned away, for my idol's sake,
To another path that was smooth and wide:

But I thought to go, ere night came on,
Back to the fold, to the Shepherd's care;
But so far I strayed, ere day was done,
That night finds me on the moorlands bare.

So very dear hath my idol grown,
It seems to be of my life a part;
Yet gladly now I will lay it down,
If I can tear it from out my heart.

* * * *

Alone on the moorlands, bleak and bare,
I shall faint with fear, I shall die with cold,
Unless He come, and with tender care
Bear me again to His safe, warm fold.

HELPING THE ROBINS.

From my old mossy seat, draped with sunshine and shadows,
I was helping the robins, this morn, in their tunes,
Looking o'er the green hills and daisy-starred meadows,
I said, "Of all lands, ours has lovliest Junes!"

Then up from the southland—all sweet with the kisses
Of magnolia and orange—soft zephyrs sped,
And they brought benedictions, in balmy caresses,
Coaxing lilies from me, giving roses instead.

Then they wooed me to "dreamland," in far southern
bowers,
Where bright-plumaged birds carol all the day long;
And I feasted my eyes on the tropical flowers,
'Till my soul grew all drunken with beauty and song.

Then dreamily floated before my tranced vision,
Such radiant beings in garments of white,
And they said, "Come with us to the gardens Elysian,
Where the scent of the lilies is perfect delight.

"Where the musical flow of the 'Beautiful River'
Blends with the sweet notes, happy voices prolong;
Where the viol and harp is attuned to the Giver
Of beauty and fragrance, of love and of song."

O rapturous joy! now the "portal" uncloses,
And such beauty and grandeur no mortal hath seen!
I scent and I see Eden's lilies and roses,
And I hearken the music of Zion's glad strain.

* * * *

From my old mossy seat, draped with sunshine and
shadows,
I was helping the robins, this morn, in their tunes,
When out of my sight vanished mountains and
meadows,
And I ken'd the "fair land" where the months are
all Junes.

WINTER.

Nevermore the air is stirred
By the singing of a bird,
Only lonesome sounds are heard
  And the dreary days seem long.
Bitterly the winds are blowing,
Wearily the clouds are snowing,
And my thoughts are never flowing
  To the measure of a song.

SUMMER.

Cometh now a subtle sense,
How I wist not, nor from whence,
But with worldless eloquence,
  Nature worships at the shrine.
High the fleecy clouds are climbing,
Tenderly the winds are timing,
With my thoughts that run to rhyming,
  Fitting to a pleasant tune.

My Muse Hath Flown.

My muse hath flown, and my harp unstrung,
Lieth idly by :
Tho' I asked with tears for the songs unsung,
Made she no reply ;
But sadly smiled, as she plumed her wings,
While I wept my harp with its silent strings.

Yet I will try just a note or two,
Tho' the chords be missed,
For the very few, the very few,
Who will care to list :
Only to say that I'll wake, ere long,
A golden harp to a glad new song.

Only to tell, as I weeping wait
On the hither stand,
That I hear a sound as of cymbals sweet,
From a far-off land :
Now plainly fall on my ravished ear,
Triumphal notes from the shining choir.

O can it be that my muse hath flown
To those fairer skies ?
And may she not be my very own,
There in Paradise ?
To sweetest chords, my harp's golden strings,
May she not sweep with immortal wings ?

Yea, I have tried just a note or two,
Tho' the chords were missed,
For the very few, the very few,
Who have cared to list:
And now the harp, that in tears I swept,
On the hither shore I will leave unwept.

THE RIVER OF DEATH.

As I stand beside the River of Death,
Its tide closeth over my friends, one by one:
What mystery lieth the dark waves beneath,
Hold they the key that unlocks the "Unknown?"

Aye, long I have stood upon its cold brink,
And I long, yet fear, to plunge in the tide;
So deep look the waters, I tremblingly shrink,
Still cowering here on the hither side.

And my fainting heart murmurs, o'er and o'er,
How long, oh how long, shall my weary feet
Linger on the strand of Time's barren shore,
Where Life's ebbing sands and Death's cold waves
meet."

Now from the River there riseth a mist,
Enshrouding my form in its chilling fold,
And my locks are wet, and my brow is kissed,
By the icy spray from the waters cold.

If only the "Mystic Gates" were ajar,
That I might see into the "Unknown"—
If only a light from the realms afar,
Ever over the darksome waters shone—

Might I catch one glimpse of the heav'nly strand,
One note from the choir on the other side,
Methinks that I would no longer stand
Trembling, on the brink of the darksome tide.

Down close beside the River of Death,
Life's ebbing sands meet the dark waters' flow.
The mystery lying the waves underneath,
Ere long I shall know—ere long I shall know.

GOING HOME.

A strange boat moored on our strand to-night,
A foreign barque from the "Mystic Sea,"
Its gleaming sails, that are snowy white,
This message glad wafted unto me:

That now the tread of my halting feet,
The weary night of my watch is o'er,
That endless morn, oh so fair and sweet,
Dawneth for me on the golden shore.

But where is he who went early home,
Whose barque was launched on the morning tide?
He promised me he would surely come
To meet me, down at the waters' side.

He kissed good-bye, when he went away,
On fair young cheeks and on curls of gold.
Will he know these locks, grown so thin and gray,
And these sunken cheeks, haggard now and old?

Ever and anon, as a boat drew nigh,
I watched and hoped for some sign or word,
But every sail passed me silently by,
'Till my heart grew sick with "hope deferred."

But now my barque waits the evening tide,
And my lover waits on the golden strand,
For the gleaming sails that bring his bride
To him and home, in the heavenly land.

What wondrous sign do my glad eyes see?
What shining light gleaming from afar?
Ah my lover beckoneth unto me,
That the "pearly gates" have been left ajar.

A magic power hath the clime of heaven,
For sweet and strange, is the story told
In whispered words: "Unto me is given
My fair young bride, with her curls of gold."

OUR DARLING.

All tunefullest birds seemed only a-singing
Their songs for her heeding ;
All loveliest flowers seemed ever up-springing
Where her feet were treading :
If with us she listened, then music was sweetest,
If with us she wandered, then beauty completest.

* * * * * *

All that we saw was a light softly fading,
As a summer day closes ;
And on her cheek faint and fainter the shading,
Just lilies for roses :
All that we heard was the flowers a-sighing,
"Birds, hush your songs, for our darling is dying."

Then from her forehead we smoothed the soft tresses,
With bright ribbons tying
Them all so lovingly, pressed our last kisses
On lips unreplying
To our caresses, our pitiful pleading ;
Never before were they dumb or unheeding.

Sadly, so sadly, a low couch we made her,
Where willows were weeping ;
Tenderly, tenderly there we have laid her,
To long dreamless sleeping :
Lilies and roses we broidered all over
The velvet counterpane, lying above her.

Oh what avails it that bird-notes are ringing,
Through sweet-scented bowers ?
Oh what avails it that summer is bringing
Us gifts of rare flowers ?
Our all of beauty and fragrance lies sleeping
Under the flowers, where the willows are weeping.

REGRET.

Oh would that I had died, that I had died,
While I so fondly deemed
Fair Friendship what she seemed,
Ere she my trust so ruthlessly betrayed.

Oh would that I had slept, had calmly slept,
Beneath the summer flowers,
Before the weary hours
Had come to me, when o'er false Love I wept.

Would my ears had been sealed, to all sound sealed,
Ere they had heard that Truth
Had wandered in the path
Of error ; and therein her white robes trailed.

O Friendship, Love and Truth ! ye have not given
All that I have desired,
And I am so tired, so tired ;
Kind, pitying God, wilt thou not give me Heaven ?

RETROSPECT.

This gala night
Recalls a scene of long ago,
When life for me was all aglow
With hope's soft light;
When my heart beat
The time to music soft and sweet.

* * * * * *

The festive hour
Was gay with music, dance and song,
When, stealing from the happy throng
To vine-clad bower,
Thro' rose-wreathed bars,
I idly watched the gleaming stars.

The soft June air
Was pulsing with sweet melody,
While zephyrs wafted scents to me
Of flowers rare;
An Eden seemed
My bower of roses, while I dreamed.

Softly there came
Adown the star-lit path a step;
Heart, faithful vigil thou did'st keep
Thro' the sweet dream;
Thou knewest well
The step that bade my pulses thrill.

Words murmured low
Told tender love. I veiled my eyes
Lest they reveal their glad surprise,
Their depths of joy ;
But love divined
Their secret well. Love is not blind.

That morn of June,
Vocal with nature's melody,
A soft rose-light tinged earth and sky.
Then cloudless noon
Rich rays let fall,
But sudden tempest darkened all.

A fresh young life,
In brightness rivaling the June,
Had morn's rich promise of a noon
With pleasure rife.
Ah with'ring blight
That brought at noon a starless night.

* * * * * *

I thought that all
My love was dead, long years ago,
That never more its anguished throe
My heart could feel—
But ah, again
To-night, I've felt the old-time pain.

Why hast thou come,
Grim phantom of the long ago?
Why hast thou ris'n to haunt me now?
Begone, begone,
Unwelcome guest,
Go sleep with the long-buried past!

Is there no place
This side the grave, where memory
May not pursue? Then let me lie
In Death's embrace,
And there escape
Forever from this phantom shape.

A VISION.

O pitying slumber, a vigil keep
To-night, o'er my throbbing brain;
That I may forget in a dreamless sleep,
For a little while, all pain.

* * * * *

An angel came, clothed in shining white,
And I heard a sweet voice say,
"Come thou with me, from the weary night,
To the realms of perfect Day."

Then we quickly passed over death's dark stream,
And over a shining strand,
'Till I saw fair mansions in soft light gleam,
And a white-robed angel band.

And I saw again, as they lowly kneeled
To worship the great I AM;
And I heard them playing on harps of gold,
Loud hosannas to the Lamb.

Then they brought to place on my brow a crown,
A harp to put in my hand,
And they drew me near to the dazzling throne,
To play with the angel band.

But humbly bowing before the throne,
With strange weariness oppressed,
I plead, "Give me neither harp nor crown,
Give me only perfect rest."

Then the heavenly choir played a grand, sweet strain:
And soft on my ravished ear
Fell these precious words—"Here is no more pain,
For the perfect rest is here."

By the Sea.

We were wandering over the sands,
Down beside thee, O murmuring Sea—
Did'st thou know of the clasping of hands,
Of the tender words whispered to me?
Methinks that thou knewest, for then far and wide
Thy soft moon-lit waves seemed to grow glorified.

* * * * * *

O Sea, did'st thou know, did'st thou know,
Of the words, the vain words that they said,
When they laid him, my darling, so low,
Covering even his beautiful head?
They said, "Come away now, he lieth asleep,
And will not awaken though much thou may'st weep."

They said, "Come away now—he sleeps."
Did they think I would fret, I would cry?
Fools! wherever the Sirocco sweeps
It leaveth the fountains all dry:
And though the Sahara has oases for palm,
No green breaks the waste of my life's Dead Sea calm.

I know not how long he hath slept—
Maybe one year, or maybe a score—
No record but this have I kept,
Snowy hair that was golden before:
How many, O Sea, of the cycles of Time
Would change sunny curls to thin locks of rime?

* * * * * *

I am wandering over the sands,
Once again down beside thee, O Sea—
Dost thou mark now how listless my hands?
Dost thou hear what the winds say to me?
They say, "Come with us where he slumbering lies,
And list by his couch while we sing lullabies."

They say, "Come with us where he lies."
And once at their pleading I went,
But the flower-tints wearied my eyes
And my heart grew sick of their scent:
The cover was broidered all over his bed
With lilies so white and roses so red.

* * * * * *

Is this a forgotten refrain,
Or true tale learned in sweet childhood-hours,
That "The sleeping shall waken again
In a rare land of song and of flowers?"
That "Beside crystal seas they shall walk golden sands,
And never aloose fall lovers' clasped hands?"

Be quiet, be quiet, O Sea!
Bid thy whispering waves softly flow—
If it were a true tale they told me
Could I sleep, I would know, *I would know*—
Sea, thou art cruel such moaning to make;
How long, O how long, wilt thou keep me awake?

HIDE NOT THY FACE—I AM IN TROUBLE.

I am weary, Lord, of my crying—
Mine eyes fail while I wait for my God :
O carest Thou not that I'm lying
'Neath the weight of Thy chastening rod ?

O measure the depths of my anguish,
And loosen the fetters of pain ;
O end this dark night, where I languish,
A slave in the service of Sin.

Still darkness my life is enshrouding—
Is Mercy's ear deaf to my cries ?
Is Pity, with tearful eyes, brooding,
While I drain Sorrow's cup to the lees ?

O Christ, by Thy soul's desolation,
When Thou troddest the wine-press alone ;
By mem'ry of the blessed ministration
Of the white-robed, the heavenly one ;

For Calvary's sake, wilt Thou hide me
From the doubts that have pierced Thee again ;
From life's many ills that betide me,
From the long weary bondage of Sin ?

Methinks now a faint light is gleaming—
Is Hope spreading her pinions at last?
Thro' darkness, one bright ray is beaming,
Is it Bethlehem's Star of the East?

Yes Savior, my Savior, I hear Thee—
Like a mother's sweet, hushed lullaby
Are the low loving words: "I am near thee,
Safely rest, weary child, IT IS I!

"My hands are strong to uphold thee,
If darksome or strange grows thy path:
My arms shall closely enfold thee,
Thro' the valley and shadow of death."

ABRAHAM'S SACRIFICE.

Then unto Abraham, God spake
And gave this wondrous strange command:
"Now get thee hence into the land
Whereof I tell. With thine own hand,
An offering of thy loved son make."

O grand, sublimely grand, the faith
That answered not; but reverently
Arose the mandate to obey:
The while a father's heart there lay,
As in the direst pangs of death.

Afar from kin and native land,
Parent and child now take their way ;
Toiling on, on, from day to day,
Till in the distance they espy
The mount for sacrifice designed.

Now toiling up the mountain's side,
The child breaks forth in questioning :
" Father, the fire and wood we bring,
But where's a lamb for offering?"
" My son, a lamb God will provide."

Pen must thou fail, thy task undone ?
Ah well I knew thou could'st not paint
That wondrous scene, upon the mount,
When Abraham in silence bent
To sacrifice his only son.

Hearken, from Heaven is heard a voice,
" Lay not thine hand upon the lad,
For now I know thou fearest God.
Thy heart the offering hath made :
Behold a lamb for sacrifice."

Again from Heaven is heard a voice,
" Because thou hast done God's command,
As lies upon the shore the sand,
So shall thy seed cover the land :
All nations shall in thee rejoice."

CHURCH BELLS.

Hearken the church bells, this morn are inviting,
In tones clear and sweet;
"Come where the Lord in his temple is waiting,
His people to meet!

"Come to His altar, all thy sin confessing,
Thy doubt and thy care;
Faithful and true, He hath promised a blessing,
In answer to prayer."

Plainly, so plainly, now they are saying,
"Turn, sinner, and live!"
Now they are tenderly, pleadingly praying,
"O Savior, forgive!"

Pitiful bells, I can tell by the sighing,
Of that tender strain,
That ye remember the couch where I'm lying,
In sadness and pain.

Softly ye whisper, "The Father heedeth
When helpless ones call;
For at His feet the Son intercedeth,
'I suffered for all.'"

And methinks now, the sweet bells are telling,
These kind words to me;
"While to His temple many He's calling,
He cometh to thee."

"Where two or three in His name are meeting,
He spreadeth a feast;
Even beside thy low couch He is waiting—
O welcome thy Guest!

"One who hath long and lovingly sought thee,
Thy sins to forgive;
Partake of the bread and wine He hath brought thee—
O eat, drink, and live!"

List, the last cadences whisper in dying,
"Thy Savior was slain!"
But the sweet echoes are softly replying,
"He liveth again!"

And while my lips are slowly repeating,
'For me He was slain!'
Accord with echoes my heart is beating,
'For me lives again."

FAITHFUL.

Pure, stainless tho' it be,
Yet all the heartless world would chide,
And its deep love for thee,
Darling, my heart must ever hide.

Impassable the wall
That fate hath built between our lives;
In its dark shadow still
The precious flower of love survives.

A careless word or smile,
When we perchance do meet or part.
Tho' tense with pain, the while,
Is ev'ry fiber of my heart.

And I would ask no more
If I might know my rightful rest.
One little, peaceful hour,
Within the shelter of thy breast.

If only I might press,
Just once, my famished lips to thine,
In a long, clinging kiss,
No greater joy I'd ask for mine.

Oft times in happy dreams.
My tired head on thy breast hath lain,
And then from morn's bright gleams
I've turned, and prayed to sleep again.

O can it be a sin
To cherish in my heart this love?
The only joy I've known,
An earnest of the bliss above.

And, darling, in the years
To come, will our souls drift apart?
Watered with hopeless tears,
Will love's flowers wither in the heart?

It may not, cannot be,
For love attuned our souls to flow
In perfect harmony—
No note of discord they may know.

Our love is not in vain;
As gold is by the fire refined,
So our lives, thro' this pain,
Have grown more pitiful and kind.

And when a shadowy form
Shall beckon me, with its white hand,
To come from clouds and storm,
Home to the brighter, better land,

Darling, if only then
My head upon thy breast could lie,
I'd know no dying pain—
I'd only know 'tis sweet to die.

After Many Years.

Dearest scenes of my happy childhood,
Viewed once more with a fond delight,
Dear old paths through the tangled wild-wood,
My feet press you again to-night.

On and on, through the scented gloaming,
Eagerly ; for my heart divines
There awaits for my tardy coming,
Welcomings from the dear old pines.

But the song I am slowly singing,
Burdened seems, as with hopeless tears,
And the gift I am sadly bringing
To my pines, after many years.

Is a life that is sick with grieving—
Crushed and bowed 'neath the cruel rod—
Is a heart that is unbelieving.
In all, all save a pitying God.

When a child, with my bare feet pressing
The soft turf, in this fragrant shade,
With sweet trust came I, oft confessing
All the thoughts that my bosom swayed.

Lordly castles I planned and builded,
Peopling them with the fair and young;
And grand pictures, with gold all gilded,
On the beautiful walls I hung.

And my castles were ever haunted
By music sweet as a wind-swept lyre;
With hushed breath, oft my fancy painted
Lovely faces for all the choir.

Rarest colors, that mortal vision
E'er beheld, with sweet breath of flowers,
Made life seem to me Elysian,
Where Love dwelt in enchanted bowers.

Oft times, when in my childish gladness
Wide her pinions had Fancy spread,
Undertones of a pleading sadness
Seemed in the whisperings overhead.

Ah me, ah me, there was prescient meaning
In the whsipers. If I had known
It, maybe, I would not be singing
Songs to-night, to so sad a tune.

Ah me, ah me, if I had not wandered
From the friends of my youth apart,

It maybe I had never squandered
All the wealth of a loving heart.

But the years with their sorrows freighted,
Have flowed into Time's soundless sea ;
And the bliss childhood dreamed and waited,
Is a dream still, to-night, to me.

Ah to-night, 'tis no idle seeming,
But a truth which my heart divines,
That, in sleep that will know no dreaming,
Soon I'll rest 'neath my dear old pines.

So Tired.

I am so tired, so tired,
And I have lost my way, I've strayed so far from Him
I think I did not watch, and I forgot to pray.
Somehow the path grew dim,
And I've been groping blindly,
Such long and toilsome ways my aching feet have pressed—
Oh I must strive to find Him—to-morrow I'll begin—
To-night, I needs must rest.

Once, on a calm, sweet morn,
A melody was in my heart, a tender strain
Was blent with these blessed words, "Thou heavy-laden, come!"
"I come," the sweet refrain—
That was long time ago—
Now I am weary, sad, by doubt and care oppressed;
The morn no brightness brings to me, the day no joy,
The evening brings no rest.

I sit with idle hands,
I meant to work to-day. Alas! the evening's come.
So much I had to do, but I grew tired and failed;
Yes, failed—left all undone—
If I might only lay
My weary, aching head upon his pitying breast,
If I might only know His love, His blessed love,
That bringeth peace and rest.

I am so tired, so tired,
I cannot walk alone. Ah no I cannot stand—
Must I stay here and perish? Die when Christ has died?
O Father, take my hand
And lead me thine own way!
Surely Thou only, knowest what for me is best.
No evil I will fear if Thou my way wilt guide,
Thou leadest unto rest.

GRIEVING.

You have spoken to me harshly,
But I deem you did not know,
When a heart is sick to dying,
Words could wound it so.

Weak and erring, thought disloyal
Never in this heart had birth:
Was it well that you should question,
You of all the earth?

Standing where the shining portal
Opens out upon the night,
Yet my grieving, tearful grieving,
Dims the golden light.

Ling'ring at the mystic threshold,
Ravished by a soft, sweet strain,
Still the cruel words you uttered
Float and float between.

When the shadows all are rifted,
When with spirit eyes I ken,
I will know the why you said them,
Then and not till then.

When the great "Recording Angel"
"True," above my name shall write,
Still your face will rise before me,
Doubting as to-night.

When I hearken to the welcome
Of the angels' choral strain,
Still will cruel words you've spoken
Float and float between.

PRESENTIMENT.

Darkened mounds are dimly blending
With my shadowed path to-night,
Where the cypress lowly bending
Whispereth to head-stones white.
Is it only fancy's weaving
That, ere the young moon shall wane,
Nevermore to joy or grieving,
My still heart shall throb again?

Oh! this strange, strange thought of dying—
Oh! this mystic dreamless sleep—
Oh! this dumb and helpless lying
In a silence long and deep;
Deaf to call of those who love me,
Friends my heart to-night holds dear,
Friends whose joy or grief shall move me
Nevermore to smile or tear.

Ere the chimes for holy vespers
  Many times shall pulse the air,
Will one voice be dumb that whispers
  Low, to-night, the evening prayer?
Pale moon, tell me, ere thy waning,
  Will the pearly dew-drops lave
Tender grasses, fresh up-springing,
  On a lowly, new-made grave?

Cypress, when with gentle whispers
  Low thou droopest o'er my bed,
Thinkest thou at hour of vespers
  One prayer will for me be said?
Thinkest thou the sod above me
  Will by grieving eyes be wet?
Thinkest thou the hearts that love me
  Ever, ever will forget?

MINA.

One sweet May-day, the angel Death
Came on a mission from the skies,
In quest of flowers for a wreath
To grace a bower in Paradise.

Catching the breath of soft perfume,
The watchful angel soon espied,
Half hidden by the parent stem,
Twin rose-buds nestled side by side.

Awhile the shadowy white wings drooped
Above the bower where they grew :
Then tenderly to earth he stooped,
Gathered and bore one bud away.

One bud of delicate perfume,
Of tender beauty frail and rare,
It could attain a perfect bloom
Only in heaven's purer air.

Removed from every blighting breath,
From chilling winds and changing skies,
Entwined within a fadeless wreath,
Our sweet bud blooms in Paradise.

ILLUSION.

Waking or sleeping, they haunt me ever,
  Strange, mystic measures I cannot grasp—
Sleeping or waking, they leave me never,
  Shadowy forms that I cannot clasp.

Plaintive and sweet is a hymn of vespers,
  Floating from shrine of a devotee ;
Tender and low, is it angels' whispers,
  The twilight breezes have borne to me

Now restless spirits seem near me, mocking
  My weary brain with discordant tunes—
Now loving voices to me are talking
  Of days of eld, of old rhymes and runes,—

Ah, well I know gaunt and ghostly fingers
  Swept those wild strains from some spectral lute—
Weird harmony in my soul still lingers,
  Tho' the chords are hushed, tho' the strings are mute.

Unreal, yet ever these spectres taunt me,
  As I turn and turn in a fruitless quest—
Unreal, yet ever these measures haunt me,
  Filling my soul with a vague unrest.

A CHILD'S INQUIRY.

Father, think'st thou I am nearing
  Yet the "narrow way" I seek?
Through the darkness, hoping, fearing,
  I am groping, blind and weak;
Crooked are my steps and slow:
Father, have I far to go?

Mother, kneeling at thy altar,
  Morning, noon, and night, to pray;
Do thy footsteps never falter,
  Walking in the "narrow way?"
Mother, if 'tis well with thee,
Wilt thou plead with Christ for me?

Sister, I am toil-worn, weary,
  Hungering for the bread of life;
Tired of all my wanderings dreary,
  Perplexed by earth's care and strife:
Sister, are the way-marks plain;
I the narrow way would gain.

Brother, listen. Day is waning,
  And I'm fearful of the night;
Long I've wandered, sad, complaining;
  Can'st thou guide my steps aright?
Brother, long I've been astray,
  Now I seek the narrow way.

Christian father, praying mother,
Lead me—I am very weak—
Loving sister, faithful brother,
You who know the way I seek,
Leave me not alone to pray;
Help me find the "narrow way."

THY WILL BE DONE.

Vainly I strive to pray,
Thy will be done, O Lord!
But tho' my lips essay
To speak, they form no word.
I'm helpless 'neath the chast'ning rod,
Give grace and strength to me, O God!

When life was fresh and fair,
'Twas joy to say each word;
How good Thy precepts are,
I love them all, O Lord:
Thou gav'st in mercy every one,
O God, my God, Thy will be done!

But losses followed gain,
The tares grew with the wheat:
Pleasures were mixed with pain,
The bitter with the sweet:
Still my heart echoed every word,
His will be done, it is the Lord.

But when the toil of years
  Gives fruitage but of woe,
When blinded by my tears,
  I see not where to go,
When friends I love have turned away,
Thy will be done, I cannot say.

* * * * * *

"When all the way was bright,
  Thine eyes marked out a path;
And trusting to thy sight,
  Dim grew the eye of faith;
'Twas only in prosperity
That thou would'st trust thy way to Me.

"What thou hast counted loss,
  Will be a gain untold;
What seems to thee but dross,
  Will prove the finest gold;
What thou hast deemed the chast'ning rod,
Will be a staff, thy help to God.

"Did friendship give a stone,
  When thou did'st ask for bread?
Art thou famishing alone?
  Then, surely, thou dost need
The Friend, who can all sorrow heal,
Who faithful is, thro' woe or weal."

O Lord, thy voice I hear,
Altho' I may not see ;
Now lead me anywhere,
But so I walk with Thee :
Now Jesus pleadeth at the throne,
" Father, at last, Thy will is done !"

GOD'S HARVEST.

Hearken to this command, the Lord of harvest gives :
" Go laborers and reap for me the precious grain ;
Yea, need of harvesters hath He, to gather sheaves,
For see the fields are white on every hill and plain.

Brother, thro' dewy morn—sister, thro' glaring noon—
The bounteous harvest waits, the laborers are few !
O bring thy sickle forth—leave not thy part undone—
O hasten to the work He giveth thee to do !

Will any say at eve, " My hands have never wrought
Within the harvest fields, I have no sheaves to bear,
I waited thro the morn ; but ere the noon I thought
To go with reapers forth, the harvest toil to share.

" Ah, will He know the fears that caused my soul to faint,
When reapers passed me by with joyous shout and song,
How o'er my rusted blade, in bitter tears I bent,
So near the harvester, idle the whole day long ?"

So near the laborers art thou, with tear-dimmed eyes,
Brother, His harvest waits where'er man's foot hath trod ;
Glean but the scattered grain that in thy pathway lies,
Help raise some fallen one and thou hast wrought for God.

Sister, hast thou grown faint beneath the noonday sun,
And laid thy sickle down ? Listen, He speaks to thee ;
" Share but a humble crust with some poor starving one ;
Whisper a kindly word and thou hast wrought for Me ;

God grant there be no hands empty at eventide,
When from the harvest-fields Thou biddest all to come ;
May each voice swell the song, that echoes far and wide ;
The hymn of glad content, the joyous Harvest-Home.

MABEL.

Just when the bud was blooming
Into the perfect flower,
When from its soft perfuming
Sweet was each passing hour;

Just when its rare unfolding
Gave us such pure delight,
Loosed was our earthly holding,
Dimmed was our earthly sight;

Softly were white wings drooping,
Over our earthly bower;
Gently an angel stooping
Gathered our precious flower.

There, by the Shining River,
Where the amaranths bloom,
There, where are soft winds ever,
Laden with sweet perfume;

There to a heavenly bower,
Angels our steps will lead;
There we shall find our flower,
Pure as the love of God.

JUST FOR TO-NIGHT.

Let me dream my sweet, sweet dream again,
Just for to-night, for only to-night,
Let my heart forget its loss and pain—
Entranced in a vision pure and bright,
Ere the morning light brings loss and pain—
Let me dream my sweet, sweet dream again.

Let me know the touch of a vanished hand,
Just for to-night, for only to-night—
Let it reach to me from the unseen land
Thrillng my soul with a sweet delight—
Oh, give me back from the unseen land
To-night, one touch of a vanished hand.

Let me hear again the old love-tone,
Just for to-night, for only to-night—
With a whispered love, all, all my own,
Let it come to me from the realms of light—
With a whispered love, all, all my own,
Let me hear to-night, the old love-tone.

Let me kiss my darling's lips again,
Just for to-night, for only to-night—
That I may keep through the years of pain,
One hallowed thought of a pure delight—
Intensest joy, half akin to pain,
Just for to-night, I would know again.

BERTIE.

A Little Boy, two and one-half years of age who never walked or talked.

A little child was given
To win our hearts with love's sweet arts,
Then with love's chords draw them to heaven.

A tender, tropic flower,
That paled in bloom, exiled from home,
That drooped and pined for native bower.

Tense grew the mother's ear
For those sweet chords, her babe's first words ;
Music she vainly longed to hear.

Gently the Healer came,
The pitying Christ whose touch sufficed :
The loosed tongue whispers His dear name.

The little helpless feet,
That never tried a way beside,
Are walking now the golden street.

Mother, thy patient love,
Thy unshed tears, thro' pain-fraught years,
Shall have sweet recompense above.

For at the pearly gates,
Methinks thine ear these words shall hear,
" Mamma is come, where Bertie waits !"

COMMUNING WITH THE PAST.

With a kind "good-night" they have sought their rest,
May angels watch o'er my dear ones' slumbers;
But I linger still with the dear old Past,
Communing over the dying embers.
Memory has brought me the missing key
And helped to move bolts and bars away,
'Till the bygone years are again To-day.

Again I look on a sweet young face,
That softly framed in golden tresses,
Seems shining out with a holy grace,
Only meet for the angels' kisses.
Now fragrant June bringeth offerings rare,
And I weave a wreath for her shining hair,
For the "Bridegroom" comes from the "mansions fair."

Here's "Will," and "Frank," and brown-eyed "Ned,"
Placing their goal at thrice twenty paces;
Fleet-footed "Will" has come out ahead,
He wins in most of their merry races:
But "one, two, three," and again they go,
With sparkling eyes and with cheeks aglow,
Ha! ha! "Brown-eyes" is the winner now.

And there a troop of gay-hearted girls
To fresh spring-woods their light steps are wending;

The south-wind tosses their tangled curls,
While sweet bird-notes with their songs are blending;
And merrily on, for right well they know
The hillside where sweetest wood-pinks grow,
And where the earliest violets blow.

But time speeds on, and I see again
A bridal group at an altar kneeling;
While yonder passes a sable train,
And funeral notes on my ears are falling:
And a bride goes forth to the untried years,
And a mother toils through her hopes and fears,
And a mourner watches through falling tears.

A soldier's grave in a Southern clime
And sad-faced comrades above it bending;
O brown-eyed "Ned," ere thy manhood's prime,
Of life's short race thou hast found the ending:
But a shining goal sure thy feet had won,
For thy youthful brow wore the laurel crown,
Thy country gave to a patriot son.

An old man sits at the close of day,
With soft night-winds through his white locks playing;
His wistful gaze seemeth far away,
And listen, what are the pale lips saying:
"'Twas ever thus with my laggard feet,
In every race they were sure to beat,
But I must be near the goal to-night:

"The boys will wonder what I'm about,
They'll say, 'What can be his steps belating?"
Now, did I dream or was that their shout?
"Come on, come on, at the goal we're waiting."
"Yes, boys, I come, but my feet are slow."
A soft light breaks o'er the furrowed brow,
And the laggard joineth his comrades now.

Yes, guardian angels will keep to-night
My dear ones resting in quiet chambers;
But dear old Past it has been so sweet
To sit with thee by the dying embers.
To be a child on the hills once more,
To hear the songs that I heard of yore,
To list again to love's sweet, sweet lore.

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The last faint spark of the dying fire
On the cold hearth-stone at my feet is falling;
The faithful clock, in the corner there,
The hour of midnight is loudly telling:
And Memory says, "Leave the bygone years
And let me shut all their mystic doors:"
But rent in twain are the bolts and bars.

ADA.

The wearisome journey is past,
The goal of the christian attained :
The feet of our darling at last
The Beautiful City have gained.
Joyful the anthems angel bands play,
"One more, a victor, is crowned to-day.

His blessed Word her staff and her guide,
She patiently journeyed His time ;
Before her, just over the tide,
Lay the haven, the beautiful clime.
"Father," she pleaded, nearing death's strand,
"Thy child is weary, reach her Thy hand."

Oft-times, as we journey, we sing
The songs that our darling loved best ;
And sweet are the visions they bring
Of her, in her beautiful rest ;
In soft shining garments the purified wear,
With roses of Sharon a-gleam in her hair.

She is a blessed light, shining down
To us, from the City of God ;
And eagerly our feet press on
The way that she patiently trod :
Soon. footsore and weary, we'll halt at death's strand,
Father, in mercy, then reach us Thy hand.

TIRED.

Droop low, weary lids, and cover my eyes
Away from the light.
He will know, just the same, tho' but tired'st sighs
My lips breathe to-night,
If words I must plead, ere I be forgiven,
Then surely to-night remain I unshriven.

When Time was but telling the noon of my years,
My day had eclipse :
Thence—forward my heart hath not known smiles or tears,
Only eyes, only lips.
Just life's weary tread-mill I plod, on and on,
With steps that uncertain and halting have grown.

Ah well there's a morning, a noon and a night,
For mortals decreed ;
And sometimes a gleam from Morn's pinions of light
Illumes eventide ;
And sometimes Night spreadeth her dark wings too soon,
Eclipsing a promise of goldenest noon.

Closer creep, weary lids, veil out all the light,
Perchance I may dream
That softly above sable pinions of Night,
The morning doth gleam :
Then sandaled with joy, lightly touching the years,
My heart shall have part in my smiles and my tears.

* * * * * *

Low, dreamy, and tender, a faint chime of bells
Stirs softly the air ;
The vales catch the sound from the far-away hills,
And whisper a prayer :
'Tis the hour of vespers, and incense doth rise
From lowland and upland, of prayer and of praise.

I see where two lovers, in sweet converse, walk
A daisy-starred path ;
I know they are talking the happiest talk,
The plighting of faith :
To the shadowy woodland their light footsteps wend,
Where, to welcome their troth plight, the fragrant pines bend.

A-down a cathedral's grand, shadowy aisles,
Where tapers burn low,
I see where a pallid-faced devotee kneels,
Telling over each vow.
O nun, is your heart with your altars and shrines,
Or far, far away, 'neath sweet-scented pines ?

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Keep close, weary lids, I would hear them again,
Those chimes sweet and low ;
But why does that voice sound like pleadings of pain
That would unsay each vow ?
And why does the incense, from altars and shrines,
Blend and float with the breath of murmuring pines ?

My Children.

A little darling babe lay in my arms,
And from its resting place
Smiled up into my face,
Until it held me bound by nameless charms.

Only a half year, now from gentler arms
It smiles down in my face
From its sweet resting place,
And draws my heart to Heaven by stronger charms.

A brave, bright boy still played about my knees,
Coaxing with tender wiles
My saddened lips to smiles;
His sweet soul looking out thro' loving eyes.

Four happy years I held this precious joy.
To-day his little feet
Play on the golden street,
And 'round my knee there climbs no darling boy.

But this God-given hope brings strength and joy,
And often-times beguiles
My saddened lips to smiles,
That sometime I shall go and claim my boy.

And then my little babe shall come to me;
And from its resting place
Shall smile up in my face,
And my arms nevermore shall empty be.

RE-UNITED.

Georgie—Zadee, art thou waiting
On the shining strand?
Wilt thou thro' death's shadows
Reach to me thy hand?
Wilt thou lead me, sister,
Thro' the golden gates,
Walking close beside me,
Up the pearly streets?

Zadee—Georgie, I am waiting
On the shining strand;
Walking thro' the valley,
Christ will hold thy hand.
Safely He will guide thee
Thro' the golden gates;
Come, my darling sister.
Zadee for thee waits.

Georgie—Good-by, all my dear ones,
Sister bids me come;
And we'll ask our Father
Soon to bring you home.
Zadee, morning gleameth
As I leave earth's strand,
Glory! hallelujah!
Jesus holds my hand!

THE BRIDAL.

Hush thy sobs and listen, brother,
I have something I would say,
Ere the final words be spoken,
Ere we clasp hands in good-by.

Since the hour thy bashful welcome
Caused the orphan's tears to dry,
Thou hast been a friend most faithful,
Tender, loving, kind and true.

Mind'st thou of our happy childhood,
All engirt with loving care ?
When the winter seemed but summer
Sleeping just to wake more fair ?

And the orchard, where in May-time
Pink and white blooms drifted down,
While on top-most branches swinging
Robin sang his merry tune ?

Mind'st thou when the south wind whispered
"The sweet April-time has come,"
How we sought the sunniest places,
Where a violet first would bloom ?

Then across the dewy meadows,
Trying which could fastest run ;
Baring feet to wade the streamlets,
Growing brown in wind and sun ;

Clambering the steepest hillside,
Where the wood-pinks hid away ;
Mimicking the merry blackbird,
As he sang his roundelay ;

Raking in the scented clover,
Oh what wondrous plans we made ;
Plans from which to build our future,
"Our," you know, we always said.

Wand'ring through the sweet June roses,
Now to man and woman grown,
Blue eyes lifted, shy and tender,
To the brown ones looking down.

Words low-spoken, yet each accent
Burned into my heart and brain,
"I will bring a bride, dear sister,
Ere the roses come again."

How the twilight gloomed and darkened—
The heavens a pall—the earth a bier—

How the dying roses whispered
Farewells on the fainting air.

Hush thy sobs and listen, brother,
Ere we part I this would say,
Infinite the Love that willed it,
All my doubts are cleared away.

Only when this crown of sorrow
Pressed me with its bitter pain,
Knew I how the Elder Brother
Sorrowed, seeking me in vain.

Now He comes, the Elder Brother,
To the sound of marriage bells.
Bride at last, His hand shall crown me
With a wreath of *immortelles*.

LET ME KISS YOU GOOD-BY.

Yes, I know we must part, thy love is another's,
The fond hopes I've cherished, unuttered must die ;
Henceforward our love must be sister's and brother's,
Only one boon I ask, let me kiss you good-by.

Our love-chain is severed, and what now remaineth ?
Shall I sit down in tears, or heart-broken, and sigh ?
The last link is rent, it no longer enchaineth,
So all that remains is to kiss you good-by.

You will take to your heart one fair as the morning,
Bright and pure as the dewdrops, as sparkling they lie ;
An exquisite flower your home-life adorning,
When the one is forgotten who kissed you good-by.

A sweet dream was mine, with a bitter awaking,
On my altar of love only ashes now lie ;
But through rifts in dark clouds oft sunshine comes breaking,
So I'll watch for the light while I kiss you good-by.

Yes, sad hours will come, when my heart's weary aching
Will perchance find relief in a tear or a sigh ;
But heart-fiber is tough, not easily breaking,
And I'll hope for the best and kiss you good-by.

If only to me nature kindly had given
Aught of beauty or grace, to charm lover's eye,

Perhaps our love-chain had never been riven,
And the kiss I now give would not be a good-by.

In my Father's house I, too, shall have beauty,
And love that fountains of heaven underlie ;
Happiness unalloyed, where never stern Duty
Says, "life's cross you must bear—kiss your loved one good-by,"

GOD BLESS YOU.

Only " God bless you !"
It was friendship's offering, nothing more,
But it came to me in my sorest need,
And I treasure it with a miser's greed,
And I softly whisper the dear words o'er.

Only " God bless you !"
Just three little words, but they softly fell
A benediction into my life,
And wrought, in place of its care and strife,
A brooding peace by their magic spell.

Only " God bless you !"
Just three little words, through my tears I see,
But they sink down, down through the strange, numb pain
That all day long on my heart hath lain,
And they waken a soft, sweet melody.

Only " God bless you !"
They are beautiful words, beautiful words ;
And though Fate shape me sad destiny,
And though I bow to the stern decree,
Through my saddest songs they will be sweet chords.

BABY HATTIE.

In the hushed noon of night
We heard low whisperings;
Sweet as tho' spirit hands
Were sweeping viol strings:

With bated breath we leant,
To catch each low-breathed word,
And this was the sweet song,
The wondrous song, we heard:

"Come, baby, come
Where the sunbeams play,
And birdies sing
All the long, bright day.

"Come, baby, come
From earth's cold and rime,
To the heav'nly land,
To the sunny clime.

"Come, baby, come,
And thy head shall rest,
When tired of play,
On the Savior's breast."

Then thro' the gloom of night,
We saw the gleam of wings,
Then surely spirit hands
Swept over golden strings;

For thro' the pearly gates,
Ajar to let her in,
We heard the angels sing
Once more this sweet refrain:

"Come, baby, come
Where the bowers are fair,
And the birdies' song
Fills the tender air:

"When tired of play,
In the sweetest rest,
Thy head shall lay
On the Savior's breast."

Now thro' each noon of night,
We watch for gleam of wings,
And list with bated breath
For sound of golden strings.

For in the sunny clime
Beyond the pearly gates,
Cradled on Jesus' breast,
Our baby for us waits.

ONLY A DREAM.

Only a dream—a sweet, sweet dream—
Fraught with the tenderest joy ;
I murmured softly, life is complete,
And gold is without alloy.

Summer had donned her emerald robe,
Spangled with dew-drops and flowers ;
June's balmy breath, redolent of bloom,
Kissed leafy woodlands and bowers.

Bright-winged songsters flitted through air
Trilling a happy lay ;
But sweeter and tenderer melody
Flooded my soul that day.

One half-blown rose, laden with dew,
Emitted a rare perfume,
I plucked the flower, shyly whispering,
For me thou hasted to bloom.

Thou art an emblem, lovely rose,
Of my life so fresh and sweet.
My soul hath fragrance as pure and rare,
Hath a beauty as complete.

Only bright flowers and happy birds
Vie with my heart to-day :
Only the songs that are joyous, glad,
Rival its tuneful lay.

* * * * * *

Only a dream, in youth's sweet morn—
I wakened haggard and old—
The melody gone from my stricken soul,
Tarnished my treasured gold.

Only a whisper, faint and far,
But my frightened song-birds fled—
Only a breath, but so poisonous,
It left my heart-blossoms dead.

* * * * * *

Poor, faded rose, that balmy morn
Blooming so fresh and sweet—
Withered ere noon—surely thy life
Of mine is an emblem meet.

Only the ashes left to me
Of a sweet, sweet dream of love.
Only a striving, through tears to see
If this is the "Way" above.

UNFINISHED.

Yes, dear old friend, well have you said,
"A wondrous change the years have wrought!"
A blithesome, brown-haired lass you sought,
And only me you found, instead.

A-weary now, a-weary now,
For life's sad burdens press me sore;
And all the light of days of yore
Has faded from my aching brow.

But let me for awhile, to-night,
Forget this weary, weary pain,
While with some long forgotten strain,
You wake for me the old delight.

Yea, sing some tender song to me,
And all the harp-strings of my heart,
By mem'ry swept, shall bear a part
In the dear old-time melody.

Nay, dearest friend, mind not my tears,
To-night they are not born of pain;
I'm looking thro' a summer rain,
At rainbow-tints in vanished years.

Now play for me the sweet prelude
To the grand anthem, I love best;
Hark, angels whisper, "Soon, the rest
We'll play you, 'round the throne of God!"

On reading in the "Item"

"WHAT BECOMES OF EDITORS?"

In the *Item*, a few weeks ago,
Somebody expressed much regret
For the editors' uncertain fate,
And feared they'd be "left in the wet."
On that score they've nothing to fear,
No such apprehension have I;
Indeed, there is reason to think
Their future will be hot and dry.

The good they all claim that they do
Oft savors so strongly of evil,
That, sometimes, I almost suspect
In that they are helped by the "devil."
Indeed, they're a peculiar set,
Created our patience to try;
One comfort they'll have their old "help"
To stir up a breeze where it's dry.

Now whether "three parties" there'll be
In the future I really don't know:
Politicians, who cry for reform,
Expect, I suppose, 'twill be so:
But editors, I'm very sure,
About party and hobby 'll forget—
Overcome by the heat and the dry,
They'll wish they'd "left in the wet."

Our companions always, 'tis said,
Will help us to good ways or evil;
Of course then they'll "go to the bad,"
Who get their work done by a "devil!"
I know that they always complain
Of "tight" times, and a hard, thankless lot;
In the future they'll get their reward,
Snug quarters both dry and hot.

If only to print now and then
They can get a "New Constitution:"
Their papers and pockets they'll fill
And make sure their future condition:
So they had better keep "heart,"
Hold their heads firmly and high;
If the present seems "cold," they will find
The future is both hot and dry.

French Creek, Pa., June, 1874.

THE FIRST ROBIN.

My little boys have left off their playing,
And with their faces pressed close to the pane,
Willie to Rob is eagerly saying,
"Just wait a moment, you'll hear it again—
There, don't you see its little head bobbin'?
H-o-o-ray, h-o-o-ray, I've seen the first robin!"

"What, that brown thing the wind is a-swinging?
That is a leaf left there from last year;
And what you call a robin a-singing,
Is the wind whistling through dead branches there.
Ha! ha! ha! ha! you've seen a queer robin!
Just an old leaf a-bobbin' and bobbin'."

"There, there it goes, now surely you'll own it
Is a real robin, with grayish-brown wings,
And a red jacket, and cunning black bonnet.
Oh just to listen, how splendid he sings!
Dear little birdie, his black-head a-bobbin',
I am so glad I found the first robin!"

"Yes, 'tis a robin, I just was mistaken;
This pane of glass somehow isn't right clear,
And mamma says she's heard it's a token,
When robins come, that Spring is most here:
But I am thinking this venturesome robin,
If he keeps warm, will have to keep bobbin'."

"This pane of glass is queer, only showing
You an old leaf, while I saw a nice bird;
But what was it made you hear the wind blowing,
While a bird singing so plainly I heard?
Now, since you see and hear it's a robin,
Let's get some crumbs to keep it's head bobbin'."

NAOMI.

Thro' the moaning of the March-winds,
Thro' the Spring-time's sobbing tears,
These words fell in tender accents
On our darling's wondering ears :

"From thy toiling in the vineyard,
Child, thy Father bids thee come ;
Loosen off thy dusty sandals,
Thy tired feet may rest at home.

In the gardens sweet with lilies,
In the mansions of the King,
On the banks of shining rivers,
Thou shalt songs of Zion sing.

In the white-robed choir of Heaven,
Near the Lamb who once was slain,
Thou may'st waken golden harp-strings—
To a sweet, undying strain."

Only waited she to whisper
Loving words of hope and trust ;
Then the golden bowl was broken,
And the silver cord was loosed.

Gentle sister, dear Naomi,
Did our Father love thee best ?
He hath left us weeping, toiling,
And hath given thee sweet rest.

On a Friend's Wedding.

The beautiful bride, in satin arrayed,
White roses her dark curls entwining,
A stately queen seemed, who Love's sceptre swayed
O'er one subject, all other resigning.

How Hugh came to know which ticket to choose
In Life's lottery, I can't devise ;
Cajoling Dame Fortune, by some cunning ruse,
From her hoard he has drawn a rare prize.

The pretty bridesmaids looked bewitchingly sweet,
The groomsmen's hearts to them did incline—
Just here I'll suggest, that to make life complete,
Two lives into one must combine.

Very happily passed the golden-winged hours,
Every one was pleasant and smiling ;
Our paths seemed strewn with bright-tinted flowers,
Our hearts yielded to music's beguiling.

* * * * * *

May the flowers of love their fond hearts entwine,
Sweetest fragrance ever emitting ;
Fresh as her bridal wreath, when he whispered
"thou'rt mine,"
May they be when their life's sun is setting.

To the Author of a Sad Lay Entitled "Laurel Blossoms."

I chide thee, friend, for thy mournful lay,
For thy voice attuned to a saddened strain,
When thou should'st strike as glad notes to-day
As angel's sang on Judea's plain.

The wise men brought from the East afar
Their precious gifts at the Savior's birth :
Guided by one brightly gleaming star,
They found the Light that shall gild the earth.

O, poet-friend, bring thy gift of song—
'Tis more than gold, frankincense or myrrh—
And echoing hills shall the notes prolong,
Thy meed of praise for the wondrous Star.

Not loveliness of the "laurel-blooms,"
Not fondest love that earth e'er hath given,
Nor tropic flowers with their rare perfumes,
Thrill us like song with foretaste of heaven.

Have treasured friends of thy sunny youth
Proved false? Ah well, thus He leadeth thee
To the Faithful Friend. Thou hast proved the truth,
"When all else forsake, ye may come to Me."

Now tune thy lyre to a gladder strain,
To joyous notes let thy voice accord;
Let thy rich gift swell the glad refrain
Of souls redeemed by a risen Lord.

THE UNKNOWN LANDS.

I am going over the Mystic Sea,
Far away to the Unknown Lands;
Even now the boat which has come for me
Anchors down on Life's ebbing sands.

I have watching been for the boatman pale,
Ere he comes, sends never a word;
It is but the gleam of a snowy sail,
Then the order to be aboard.

I have sometimes thought I would rather stay
Where my friends and my kindred are:
For the Unknown Lands are so far away.
I have dreaded the voyage there.

But such tales of marvel have come to me
Of these Lands, of their wealth untold—
Of ships that ride on a Jasper Sea;
Of cities with streets of gold;

Of inhabitants, that are all arrayed
In robes that are white and fine ;
Of grand, sweet anthems by harpers played ;
Of a palm and a golden crown.

So I think, dear friends, while you wait and watch,
I will go o'er the Mystic Sea ;
And the loving King, with his healing touch,
Of all pain will heal even me.

IN THE DEPTHS.

No, I cannot join your singing—
Dearest sister, I would be
Only notes of discord bringing
To your perfect harmony.

Darkness in my soul is warring—
Fiercely warring with the light—
And your softest tones are jarring
Rudely on my heart to-night.

From the depths my voice is crying—
Depths your glad eyes have not seen—
Who can reach where I am lying,
But the lowly Nazarene ?

Who can still the sorrow breaking
In such wild waves over me,
But the Christ, who, softly speaking,
Calmed the storm-tossed Galilee?

I have prayed for night to hide me
From the cruel, glaring day.
Do not weep, your tears will chide me,
Say "good-night," then go away.

Nay, dear sister, do not kiss me,
My lips are too hard and white:
Only ask your God to bless me,
When you kneel and pray to-night.

Perchance, when the morn is bringing
Light to earth, there'll come a dawn
To my soul, and then your singing,
Dearest sister, I will join.

LOTTIE.

Nestling within love's bower,
A tender bud expanding, pure and sweet,
Gave promise of a beauty rare, complete,
When it should burst in flower.

With tenderness untold,
We watched each pink-white petal soft unclose,
In blissful dreaming of the perfect rose
We by and by should hold.

But, ah! if loved flowers bloom,
Fragrant and fair, beneath caressing dews,
They know ere long earth's blights and frosts, and lose
Their beauty and perfume:

And so in Paradise
The angels pleaded, "Let us go and bear
This bud of promise to a purer air,
Where bloom immortal is."

A little while we weep,
Missing the fragrance that hath left our bower,
But soon we too may go where blooms our flower,
Our own to hold and keep.

KIND WORDS.

Defiant, bitter, cold, I stood aloof,
Searched jealously my heart and barred all out—
"They cannot know," I said, "'tis not enough,
This pity that they give me half of doubt!"

And then one I had scorned, had deeply scorned,
Spake tender words to me, kind words to me,
While, thro' the eyes that looked in mine, there yearned
A soul of sympathy, sweet sympathy.

'Twas manna fresh from heaven, 'twas blessed dew,
Distilled on dying roots of faith and hope;
The gracious plants came forth, all clothed anew,
Their balmy tendrils lifting up and up.

Away the bars that guarded my proud heart,
The lava-tide of feeling swayed and swept,
Until I bowed me down to woman's part,
To woman's part I bowed, and wept and wept.

Oh, thirsting souls are seeking ev'ry day,
For "troubled waters," that some love hath stirred;
And hearts are hungering, around our way,
For what we each can give, a kindly word.

A Midsummer Fancy.

The soft south-winds are wooing me to keep
With them this morn, a tryst;
While languorous scents of flowers and bird-songs, steep
The air in dreamful rest.

I'll hie me from the busy haunts of men,
Where carking care is rife;
My weary soul has naught with them akin,
I'm sick of toil and strife.

A castle I will build of make-believe,
Arched o'er with shining roof;
And then, with Fancy's shuttle, I will weave
Gold warp with silver woof.

I'll make a texture where the lilies kiss
The air to sweet perfume;
Where bright-winged warblers, 'twixt their songs, caress
The roses into bloom.

I'll have rare gardens, and fresh, vine-clad bowers,
With glinting lakes between;
And border all the walks with sweet-breath'd flowers,
Of tenderest, daintiest sheen.

I'll place an organ, where the lofty palms
Form orchestra, most grand:
Whose keys shall glory speak, from grand old psalms,
Swept by a master hand.

I'll have the women all so pure and fair,
The men so grand and true,
'Twill seem that Heaven's gate was left ajar,
And I have wandered through.

DREAMS AND REALITIES.

Roses and lilies gleam
In sunny plots; and there I'll build my bowers,
An odorous place wherein to while sweet hours,
And fashion my day-dream.

The sunshine seems to pall,
And Autumn's rime is ruthless and relentless;
See where my garlands lie, faded and scentless,
Ashes of roses, all!

Hearken, O spirit mine,
For grand cathedral hymns are sweetly blending
With glorious organ-tones. Incense ascending
From Music's hallowed shrine.

What sad notes float between—
Ah, 'tis an offering from the shrine of Sorrow,
The censers, hopeless hearts, that ken no morrow
Of sunshine or of sheen.

Pulse tenderly, my heart,
For even now thy door Hope is unclosing;
And Love walks softly in, on Faith reposing,
While Pity dwells apart.

Dear harp, I'll try thy strings—
Responsive to my touch, a dirge replying
Says Hope and Pity weep, where Love is dying,
And Faith droops low her wings.

Is this the crucible
Wherein the gold from dross He is refining?
We call it pain and loss, in our repining,
And murmur, O my soul!

Because the grand notes fail,
Shall we prelude a dirge with sad complaining,
And prematurely blight with tears down-raining,
The flowers we love so well?

Lord, make it plain to me
Where Thy way leads from mine, and it sufficeth—
Self must be crucified, ere soul ariseth,
Meet dwelling-place for Thee.

HOPE.

Nearer to me
Darling, for my dim eyes would fain
Trace thy dear features once again,
Once ere I die.

Nay, do not weep!
With earth's long, weary vigil past,
How sweet to close my eyes at last,
To quiet sleep.

To know, this day,
The mystic veil that hangs between
The mortal and immortal scene,
Shall pass away.

Yes wondrous fair,
Blessed with thy love life still had been—
Thy love, to me a priceless crown,
I joyed to wear.

But one rude breath
That swept across the white heart-flowers—
Those tender blooms of love's sweet hours—
Brought blight and death.

No tears we shed
Above our broken altar, where
Love's blossoms, once so fresh and fair,
Lay crushed and dead.

My very own,
My all of joy that earth had given—
The love by which I measured heaven—
No longer mine.

Then through the night
Of doubt, and fierce unrest and pain—
My soul no anchor where to lean,
No beacon light—

Christ softly spake,
"I give to thee immortal love,
I suffered death that love to prove,
Death for thy sake."

Unspeakable
This love of loves, that came to bless,
That with sweet hope, and joy, and peace,
Makes glad my soul.

WEARY.

Sunshine and song birds, and sweet-scented flowers
  Have made the day gladsome and bright,
Yet I was weary through all the long hours,
  And I am a-weary to-night.

Weary of all that my hands find to do—
  A-weary in heart and in brain—
Darling, my darling, still tender and true,
  Come love me, O love me again,

Just as you used, when to quiet my pain
  You drew my tired head to your breast;
O let me play, I'm a child, once again,
  That you are beguiling to rest.

Now with the lashes drooped close on my cheek,
  I've banished the world far away—
Darling, my darling, I'm weary and weak,
  Close, close to your heart let me lie.

Mind you that song—sweet, loving and low—
  We sang ere we drifted apart?
No, do not sing it, I'm too weary now,
  Just whisper it out of your heart.

So, with your hand gently stroking my brow,
  As time to the dear words you keep—
Darling, my darling, I'm so happy now,
  And these are glad tears that I weep.

LIFE.

Life's best part shall be mine !
Hark, from yon player's touch a trembling prelude floats,
Mine shall the glory be to waken grander notes ;
Ah me, ah me, I've swept only discordant keys.
Life's chalice holds sweet wine,
And many laughing lips upon its brim are pressed ;
I'll wait a vintage rare, a nectar gods might taste !
Ah me, ah me, I've drained only the bitter lees.

Who shall interpret life ?
Who tell what means the part that on earth's stage is played ?
Why is this mocking thirst, this hunger unallayed ?
And oh, somewhere, sometime, shall we be satisfied ?
Is *being* one with strife ?
And will each day's rehearsal help to decide what part
The Master will assign us, when all is learned by heart ?
Oh, when death lifts the curtain, will weal or woe betide ?

Life seems a mystery—
I hear the mourner's plaint, I hear the victor's psalm—
Close on the bridal bells they toll a requiem,
And pompous Opulence dwells hard by Poverty :
And I ask, " what shall be ?"
Tried in the crucible, my fine gold proved but dross—
I thought to weave a crown, I made instead a cross—
I pleaded for a loaf, a stone was given me.

Hearken now, O my soul!
A Hand is writing on the tablets of my heart,
And Inspiration reads: "Life is of God a part.
God, Alpha and Omega, Beginning and the End."
Earth-life is but a school,
And every day's rehearsal shall tell for woe or weal,
Upon the last great drama, Death only can reveal:
Then I no more shall question, for I shall understand.

THE HEART'S NOVEMBER.

There was a May when singing birds
Seemed everywhere;
When winds were music, set to words
In love's sweet lore.

There was a June when soft skies bent
O'er fragrant bowers,
To ask if Paradise had lent
Earth all her flowers.

Then fair September pressed her grapes
To rarest wine,
And gave the chalice to my lips,
A draught divine.

October wore a splendid crown,
That happy year ;
And earth laid all her crosses down,
Heaven was so near.

* * * * * *

November time ! Ah me, ah me,
Forsaken bowers ;
While dreary skies bent tearfully
O'er dying flowers.

November, thou gav'st me the wine
Of bitterness.
November, thou in lieu ef crown,
Gav'st me a cross.

November, thou art like my heart,
Songless and bare ;
And heaven and earth are far apart—
Dear Lord, *so* far.

DEAD FLOWERS.

My beautiful flowers, thro' summer time
Your breath was a rare perfume,
But the cruel frost touched your hearts to-day,
And robbed you of scent and bloom :
A joy you have been, beautiful flowers,
Companions and friends thro' many hours.

The wind sings your requiem now, dead flowers,
A lonely, desolate sound ;
My aching heart times the weird, wild tune,
While hours drag slowly around ;
And freezing drops of November rain
Seem hopeless tears, born of ceaseless pain.

There's a dreary cry in my heart to-day,
A sobbing, desolate cry,
Like the wind's wail, thro' the cypress boughs,
O'er graves where my loved ones lie :
Where loved ones lie, ah, affection laves
The flowers that bloom on how many graves !

I would gladly lay all my burdens down,
My burdens of care and pain ;
And softly sleep near my cherished flowers,
'Neath the grieving wind and rain :
Aye sweet the hope of a dreamless sleep,
Nevermore to watch, nevermore to weep.

ONE YEAR.

On happy faces fell the light
That gleamed across the old hearth-stone ;
Only a year ago to-night,
Now, wearily I sit alone.

The fire-light just as brightly gleams,
But now I see through mists of tears.
Only a year to-night ? It seems
I've lived since then a score of years.

* * * * * *

That fireside picture I can trace,
Outline each face so fair and sweet ;
And fashion forms of youthful grace
From shadows flitting 'round my feet.

Voices respond to memory's call,
Familiar sound hath every one,
Now gay, now grave, the accents fall,
And my heart thrills to each loved tone.

* * * * * *

Only a twelve-month has Time told !
Why, have I counted time aright ?
See, I am haggard now and old,
And I was young and fair that night.

Perhaps, perhaps, time seemeth long
Because my heart pulsates so slow :
A year ago—when I was young—
My life-tide ebbed to quicker flow.

The fire burns low, the shadows fall
In denser shapes, around the room :
See there's a hearse, a funeral pall ;
Here silently the mourners come.

My white lips press a still, cold brow :
O God, give back my very own !
Now, in my mute despair, I bow
Where whitely gleams a marble stone.

The pitying skies weep wearily,
The winds moan by as if in pain ;
Nature is sighing drearily
To my heart-dirge a sad refrain.

* * * * * *

What sound is that ? Ah ! 'tis the clock
Striking, the midnight hour to tell.
How sounds, to-night, my vague fears mock ;
It seemed the tolling of a bell.

Hark, there are voices on the winds,
Such wild, weird voices, calling me ;
I shudder as I close the blinds,
Lest, peering through the gloom, I see

Wild eyes, in ghastly faces set,
  Embodied spirits of the storm,
Whose out-stretched hands seem to entreat
  Release from their sad, restless doom.

* * * * * *

I've drawn the curtains, closed the blinds,
  Coaxed the low fire to bright, clear glow;
And now I'll turn from ghosts and winds
  To brightest page in memory.

ON A FRIEND'S BIRTHDAY.

On thy birthday,
How many friends their gifts will bring;
While I, too poor for offering,
  Have love for thee, far more than they.

No rare device,
Fashioned for friend by cunning hand;
But there's a gift, you'll understand,
  Beyond all art, beyond all price.

These flowers I send,
In humble trust that I may prove,
Pure as their fragrance, is the love
  I have for thee, my more than friend.

Go say, sweet flowers,
That this fond hope my bosom swells,
Sometime we'll cull the *immortelles*
  Together, in the fadeless bowers.

THE NEW SONG.

So long by Babylon's stream, I sat and wept
In sad captivity;
And when the chords of my loved harp I swept,
With tears they answered me.

And once I whispered, O my harp, how long
We've sung a mournful lay;
For Zion, city of our God, one song
May we not sing to-day?

I swept the chords. A low and sad reply
Woke 'neath my trembling hand:
"How can we sing of Zion's hope and joy,
While captives in this land?"

"O hath the Mighty One of Israel
Forgot to loose our chains?
So long, while enemies o'er us prevail,
We weep on Babylon's plains!"

But hark! a voice proclaims, "Rise, get thee hence;
Now signed and witnessed thine
Thy Father giveth an inheritance,
Fruitful in corn and wine:

"And he hath broken off thy grievious chains;
Despoiled thine enemies:
Now where the living streams make glad the plains,
Break forth in joyous lays!"

Dear harp, responsive to my eager hand,
Thanksgiving notes prolong ;
We've reached at last the promised land :
Jehovah claims a song.

GETHSEMANE.

"Sit ye here while I pray."
And then He drew apart with Peter, James and John,
"My soul is sorrowful ! tarry ye here and watch !
Yonder, I'll pray alone."

A little further on,
His face pressed to the ground, prostrate the Saviour lay,
"Father," he supplicates, "if it be possible,
Let this cup pass away."

Rising, he cometh back ;
Ah ! did the Son of God in his deep, sore distress,
Seek human sympathy ? He findeth them asleep,
O'ercome by heaviness.

"What, Simon ! sleepest thou ?
Couldst thou not watch one hour ?" Again he went away,
And, kneeling, pleads once more, "Father if possible,
Let this cup pass away."

Again with weary steps,
And form bowed low by grief, He cometh where they lay ;
One moment o'er them bends a stricken, grief-marred face,
Then sadly turns away.

O depths of agony !
O fearful night, when He the wine-press trod alone !
That thrice repeated prayer the pitying angel heard,
"Thy will, not mine, be done."

Behold a white robed one,
A messenger from Heaven appeareth with him now :
Sustains the fainting soul and sets the heavenly seal
Of peace upon His brow.

They recked not when He came,
Nor heard in their deep sleep, the loving voice that said,
"Sleep on, and take your rest: behold, the hour is come :
The Son of man's betrayed."

While yet He spake, they came :
"Hail ! Master," Judas cried, and gave the signal kiss.
Oh dark Gethsemane ! base treachery
Martyrs the Prince of Peace.

LILACS.

I was very weary
  Waiting for the flowers ;
April's snows were dreary,
  Chilling were her showers.
One gloomy day I could but weep
Over my lilacs, still asleep.

Daffodil so yellow,
  Peeping through the snow,
Cried out loudly, "halloo !
  Here's a flower for you !"
Hearing my disappointed sigh,
She hung her head and wiped her eye.

Now pray don't be jealous,
  Little daffodil ;
You are very zealous
  Every place to fill.
Can't you wake up those lazy flowers ?
Or must they wait for warmer showers ?

Just kick off the cover,
  Give each one a shake ;
April's almost over,
  Time they are awake.
If it takes them long to dress,
May-flowers will be scarce, I guess.

* * * * * *

Lo, this bright May morning,
What a sweet surprise!
Purple lilacs blooming,
Greet my gladdened eyes;
The while a fragrance, rich and rare,
Is floating on the balmy air.

Borne upon a sunbeam,
Comes a bright-winged bird;
May-be 'tis a May-dream,
But I think I heard;
"I love you, Lilac, always will,
But please don't tell Miss Daffodil.

"You were late in coming,
And one sunny day
I was flitting, humming,
Whiling time away;
Longing for something sweet to sip,
I kissed Miss Daffy's yellow lip.

"She was very charming,
And in love straightway,
Think you I did harm in
Calling there next day?
You know I'd nothing else to do,
And was so lonely, without you."

Brightly, tear-drops glistened
In Lilac's soft eye:
Eagerly I listened
For her low reply;
"Sir Humming Bird, I can't approve
Your careless way of making love.

"My trust in you is shaken
By the tale you tell;
If I'm not mistaken
You're a little 'swell.'
As I have something else to do,
I'll say good-morning, sir, to you."

Mr. Bird went flitting,
Humming, "I don't care!"
Lilac, still emitting
Fragrance through the air,
Kept bathing in the sparkling dew,
To make her dress keep fresh and new.

* * * * * *

Word, nor thought, can measure
Thy rich gifts, O Spring!
Purest, sweetest pleasure
Is thy offering:
Fragrance and song through all the air,
Freshness and beauty everywhere.

SISTER AND BROTHER.

Two little children, with sun-browned hands,
Gathering flowers in the meadow-lands.
Two little children, with wiser looks,
Trudging to school with slates and books,
Conning the lessons o'er and o'er,
They add, each day, to their wealth of lore.
Bounding homeward at close of day,
Chasing butterflies all the way.
A lad and lassie now, they plan
Work to do, when woman and man.
One, as when, with sun-browned hands,
They gathered flowers in the meadow-lands.
Man and woman, each thoughtful brow
Beareth the seal of life-work now.

* * * * * *

This is the message, word for word,
The loving sister one spring-day heard :
"The Lover waits in the heavenly home,
Put on thy bridal robes and come."
Who can tell what heart said to heart,
In that child-hood home, when the loving part ?
Or what the foreshadowings of bliss,
That stole all pain from the good-by kiss ?
Only a little time he waits,
Then softly knocks at the golden gates.
And she he led through the meadow-lands,
Welcomes him now to the shining bands.

GLAD NEW SONG.

When my way seems dreary,
I'll sing a cheerful song—
When my feet are weary,
I'll say, 'it won't be long!'

Soon I'll pass the portal,
The shining gates of gold;
And with eyes immortal,
My Father's face behold.

At the entrance leaving
Robes thro' sin I've trailed;
From His hand receiving
Garments undefiled.

Then these hands now lying
On my aching head,
Will be softly playing
A golden harp instead.

Then these feet that sadly
Falter, day by day,
Will be walking gladly
In the shining way.

* * * * *

Hope, her earthly mission
Will have done, ere long;
Changed to sweet fruition,
To a glad new song.

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